2020-12

ASSIMILATION THROUGH THE BALLOT: HOW VOTING FACILITATES INTEGRATION INTO AMERICAN LIFE

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MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

ASSIMILATION THROUGH THE BALLOT: HOW VOTING FACILITATES INTEGRATION INTO AMERICAN LIFE

by

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December 2020

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE	*Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188*

1. AGENCY USE ONLY *(Leave blank)*	**2. REPORT DATE** December 2020	**3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED** Master's thesis

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE ASSIMILATION THROUGH THE BALLOT: HOW VOTING FACILITATES INTEGRATION INTO AMERICAN LIFE	**5. FUNDING NUMBERS**
6. AUTHOR(S) Nicholas D. Knowlton	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000	**8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER**
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) N/A	**10. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER**

11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.

12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release. Distribution is unlimited.	**12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE** A

13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words)

The United States has been colloquially considered a nation of immigrants. However, the subject of immigrant integration in the United States remains insufficiently explained. Prior research suggests an association between political participation and social integration within the American mainstream, but this relationship remains underexplored. This thesis investigates the relationship between political participation and integration, with particular reference to electoral participation and the act of voting. Drawing upon democratization literature, this thesis proposes a theory of integration through elections whereby electoral participation advances a newcomer's integration into their new host society. Through evaluating this theory of integration through elections within a mixed-methods research design, the results confirm a relationship between electoral participation and integration and suggest that electoral participation may facilitate the integration process. The results further contain implications for future studies of integration and for immigration policy in the United States.

14. SUBJECT TERMS integration, assimilation, voting, immigration	**15. NUMBER OF PAGES** 115
	16. PRICE CODE

17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT	**18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE**	**19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT**	**20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT**
Unclassified	Unclassified	Unclassified	UU

NSN 7540-01-280-5500 Standard Form 298 (Rev. 2-89) Prescribed by ANSI Std. 239-18

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ASSIMILATION THROUGH THE BALLOT: HOW VOTING FACILITATES INTEGRATION INTO AMERICAN LIFE

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS IN SECURITY STUDIES
(HOMELAND SECURITY AND DEFENSE)**

from the

**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
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ABSTRACT

The United States has been colloquially considered a nation of immigrants. However, the subject of immigrant integration in the United States remains insufficiently explained. Prior research suggests an association between political participation and social integration within the American mainstream, but this relationship remains underexplored. This thesis investigates the relationship between political participation and integration, with particular reference to electoral participation and the act of voting. Drawing upon democratization literature, this thesis proposes a theory of integration through elections whereby electoral participation advances a newcomer's integration into their new host society. Through evaluating this theory of integration through elections within a mixed-methods research design, the results confirm a relationship between electoral participation and integration and suggest that electoral participation may facilitate the integration process. The results further contain implications for future studies of integration and for immigration policy in the United States.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ANES	American National Election Studies
CAT	Classic Assimilation Theory
CPS	Current Population Survey
LNA	Large-N Analysis
mb-SNA	Model-Building Small-N Analysis
mt-SNA	Model-Testing Small-N Analysis
NAT	New Assimilation Theory
USCIS	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The United States continues to be a popular destination for immigration.[1] One remarkable feature of the U.S. immigration system is the manner in which the country has historically succeeded in facilitating immigrants' integration into the social fabric of American society.[2] The United States has generally taken a laissez-faire approach to integration.[3] However, one area of inquiry building on this non-interventionist tradition concerns the use of elections as a possible vehicle for integration.[4] While prior explanations of integration frequently emphasize socioeconomic factors (such as income and level of education) as determinants of integration, research has yet to sufficiently explore alternative sources, such as civic and political participation, including how elections and voting can facilitate immigrant integration and the mechanisms contained therein.[5] In combining these branches of inquiry, this thesis explores an understudied area of homeland security concerning the integration of newcomers within American society.

This thesis investigates the relationship between participating in elections in the United States and integration into American society. This thesis additionally explains how electoral participation, with particular reference to the voting process, may affect the integration process for naturalized U.S. citizens. Drawing upon prior literature indicating elections as a causal force for advancing democracy (as opposed to being synonymous with

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1 "Top 25 Destinations of International Migrants," Migration Policy Institute, accessed September 6, 2020, https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/top-25-destinations-international-migrants.

2 See Daniel J. Tichenor, *Dividing Lines: The Politics of Immigration Control in America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002); Carl J. Bon Tempo, *Americans at the Gate: The United States and Refugees During the Cold War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008); and Susan F. Martin, "*A Nation of Immigrants* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

3 Marc R. Rosenblum, and Wayne A. Cornelius, "Dimensions of Immigration Policy," in *The Oxford Handbook of The Politics of International Migration*, ed. Marc R. Rosenblum and Daniel J. Tichenor (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 257–8.

4 Mary C. Waters and Marisa Gerstein Pineau, eds., *The Integration of Immigrants into American Society* (Washington, DC: National Academies Press, 2015), https://doi.org/10.17226/21746.

5 Waters and Pineau, eds., *The Integration of Immigrants into American Society*; see also David Scott Fitzgerald, "The Sociology of International Migration," in *Migration Theory: Talking Across Disciplines*, ed. Caroline B. Brettell and James F. Hollifield, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2014).

democracy), I argue that electoral participation furthers integration for naturalized citizens.[6] Advancing a theory of integration through elections, as new citizens vote and participate in the electoral process, they become socialized to American civic norms associated with democracy and political activity. In addition, political participation furthers integration through political parties engaging and associating with integrating citizens. As political parties and candidates seek to win elections, there exists an inherent incentive for such actors to recruit members of immigrant communities to their campaigns. Given ex-ante policy preferences among political parties and voters, engagements between parties and integrating citizens facilitate intersubjective encounters where they learn about and, at times, accommodate each other's preferences in order to achieve electoral victory. For example, in circumstances where political and policy interests align, integrating individuals succeed in joining the party where they are inherently welcomed as constituent members of the voting coalition. In turn, the integrating individual and party have an interdependent stake in working together to achieve the intended election result. Other times, an individual may adjust and/or abandon less-important material objectives to accommodate the party's shared and overarching goals; alternatively, the party may also adjust its goals or accommodate integrating individuals' interests, particularly in instances where integrating individuals comprise an important voting bloc. Consequently, integration proceeds through integrating individuals being recruited within the party system, and through parties accommodating integrating members' interests into their political platform(s).

Using a two-stage mixed methods research design (nested analysis) to evaluate whether a theory of integration through elections contributes to a broader understanding of integration in the United States, the results lend support to the overarching hypothesis concerning electoral participation as facilitating integration.[7] Using U.S. Census data reporting the voting habits among naturalized citizens, the results from visual and descriptive analysis demonstrate a relationship existing between voting and integration,

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6 See Staffan I. Lindberg, *Democracy and Elections in Africa* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006).

7 On nested analysis, see Evan S. Lieberman, "Nested Analysis as a Mixed-Method Strategy for Comparative Research," *American Political Science Review* 99, no. 3 (August 2005): 435–52, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055405051762.

through proxy measures of family income and education.[8] However, the relationship between income and voting does not substantively manifest itself until reaching family incomes of $30,000 or more per year. For education, the relationship between voting and education becomes more pronounced for those with bachelor's degrees and above. These relationships also appear to be contingent on the amount of time one has spent in the United States. For example, the relationships between voting and integration were more prominent for naturalized citizens with more than 18 years of residence.

As the results from the analysis of the U.S. Census data supported the baseline theory of integration through elections, research proceeded to an in-depth, model-testing analysis of an influential case of a prominent immigrant community in the United States: Minneapolis' Somali community.[9] As a relatively recent immigrant community establishing itself in the early 1990s, Minneapolis' Somali community has become a salient voting bloc in Minneapolis and wider Minnesota.[10] Part of the success of this group's influence in state (and national) politics may be attributed to Keith Ellison's 2006 campaign and election into the U.S. House of Representatives. Ellison's campaign strategy targeted the Somali community for support, and empirically succeeded in increasing turnout from the Somali community, as noted in turnout results from a precinct located in the heart of the Minneapolis Somali community.[11] Ellison's campaign exhibited what a theory of

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8 "Current Population Survey Supplement: Voting and Registration: 2018," United States Census Bureau, accessed May 15, 2020, https://www.census.gov/data/datasets/time-series/demo/cps/cps-supp_cps-repwgt/cps-voting.html.

9 On case selection methodology, see John Gerring, "Case Selection for Case-Study Analysis: Qualitative and Quantitative Techniques," in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*, ed. Janet M. Box-Steffensmeier, Henry E. Brady, and David Collier (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199286546.003.002, 656–9.

10 On the establishment of the Somali community in Minnesota, see Hudda Ibrahim, *From Somalia to Snow: How Central Minnesota Became Home to Somalis*, Kindle Edition (Edina, MN: Beaver's Pond Press, 2017); Maya Rao, "How Did the Twin Cities Become a Hub for Somali Immigrants?" *Star Tribune*, June 21, 2019, https://www.startribune.com/how-did-the-twin-cities-become-a-hub-for-somali-immigrants/510139341/; on the Somali community becoming a salient voting bloc, see "Muslims in America: Finding a Voice," *The Economist*, September 23, 2006, 50–1; "First Muslim Elected to Congress," NBC News, November 7, 2006, http://www.nbcnews.com/id/15613050/ns/politics/t/first-muslim-elected-congress/#.XwcwbR0pBAa; and Neil MacFarquhar, "Muslim's Election Is Celebrated Here and in Mideast," *New York Times*, November 10, 2006, https://www.nytimes.com/2006/11/10/us/politics/10muslims.html.

11 "Voter Turnout," City of Minneapolis, accessed July 9, 2020, http://vote.minneapolismn.gov/results/turnout

integration through elections anticipates: seeking to expand vote share and win elections, campaigns (and their respective political parties) are incentivized to recruit newly-naturalized and integrating citizens into their coalition. Consequently, the results from the case analysis suggest that the Somali community's increased activity and associated voting tendencies facilitated its rise as an influential group in local, state, and national politics. While not dispositive, these findings nevertheless suggest that the Somali community's electoral participation facilitated improving its overall integration. These results are commensurate with what would be expected from a "hoop test," whereby results lend support to a given hypothesis while holding short of confirmation.[12]

While the findings from this study are limited, they are nevertheless suggestive in supporting what a theory of integration through elections proposes: that participating in the electoral process can facilitate integration within American society. The findings from this study additionally raise implications for future research and U.S. immigration policy. With respect to future research, the findings from this investigation serve to warrant future studies on the subject of voting and integration. For example, future studies may include expanding survey research to track both socioeconomic indicators and voting habits of naturalized citizens, expanding inquiry into other notable immigrant communities within major U.S. metropolitan areas, and further assessing for endogeneity between electoral participation and general integration.

Policy implications relevant to homeland security include expanded citizenship education for immigrants seeking to become citizens of the United States. Recognizing that voting and electoral participation may facilitate one's integration within American society, policymakers have an interest in ensuring that new citizens are recognized as legitimate and rightful members of their respective communities. As successful integration arguably fosters resilient communities and a robust civil society, integration may be regarded as a significant factor in protecting American democracy.[13] A successful integration policy

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12 Andrew Bennett, "Process Tracing and Causal Inference," in *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*, ed. Henry E. Brady and David Collier, (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield), 210.

13 Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

promises to strengthen national ties, inculcate democratic norms and civic virtues, and foster communal resilience in times of adversity. In sum, the findings from this thesis, while suggestive, nevertheless provide practical and policy-relevant insights for advancing the ability of the United States to integrate newcomers and their descendants.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The subject of integration is both fascinating and frustrating. Integration is fascinating as it involves the inherent intersubjective exchange of identity between the integrating individual and the society accepting them as their fellow citizen. However, there is an inherent challenge in grappling with the concept of integration, given its inherent applicability to audiences in multiple academic fields (including, but not limited to, sociology, history, law, political science, and economics). While conceding that my academic journey on the subject of integration remains incomplete, I acknowledge that this journey would not have been possible without the funding and support from the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Their support provided the time and space necessary to accomplish this project and advance my studies in a field in which I previously only had a cursory understanding.

I also would like to sincerely thank Nadav Morag and Cristiana Matei for guiding me through this research project. Their feedback and contributions were instrumental in shaping the course of this research. I am grateful for their consistent encouragement and support, particularly during periods when I encountered personal frustration and disappointment. I also wish to thank my mentors at U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Wanda Posacki and Manpreet Dhanjal. I am grateful for all of the help, assistance, and support they provided when I applied to this program.

Lastly, I also wish to thank my spouse, Jordan, and our children. This program required innumerable hours away from them, for which I will always regret. In spite of this challenge, Jordan was flexible and accommodating to allow me to participate and succeed in this program, even when it required her to take additional responsibilities.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The United States continues to be a popular destination for immigration.[1] One remarkable feature of the U.S. immigration system is the manner in which the country has historically succeeded in facilitating immigrants' integration into the social fabric of American society.[2] Whether labeled "assimilation" or "integration," the United States has historically absorbed substantial numbers of foreign-born newcomers.[3] However, integration has historically been an issue taken for granted, as prior research assumed that integration would occur naturally through the initiative of immigrants, without intervention by the state.[4]

Integration (at times overlapping with assimilation, discussed below) is a salient subject for homeland security. Successful integration guards against concerns of radicalization and extremism.[5] Assimilation additionally promotes socioeconomic advancement of immigrants and their children as they weave themselves into the social fabric of American life.[6] Through integration, immigrants and their native-born counterparts arguably benefit through developing and strengthening social ties that serve

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1 "Top 25 Destinations of International Migrants," Migration Policy Institute, accessed July 21, 2019, https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/top-25-destinations-international-migrants; the four other countries (in ranked order) beneath the United States include Saudi Arabia, Germany, Russia, and the United Kingdom.

2 See Daniel J. Tichenor, *Dividing Lines: The Politics of Immigration Control in America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002); Carl J. Bon Tempo, *Americans at the Gate: The United States and Refugees During the Cold War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008); and Susan F. Martin, "*A Nation of Immigrants* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

3 Mary C. Waters and Marisa Gerstein Pineau, eds., *The Integration of Immigrants into American Society* (Washington, DC: National Academies Press, 2015), https://doi.org/10.17226/21746.

4 See Milton M. Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion and National Origins* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964).

5 See Nadav Morag, *Comparative Homeland Security: Global Lessons*, 2nd ed. (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2018), 213–55; see also Karen A. Sohrakoff, "Immigrant Integration: A Missing Component of Homeland Security Strategy and Policy" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2010), http://hdl.handle.net/10945/5421; and on the subject of extremism, see J. M. Berger, *Extremism* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2018).

6 Waters and Pineau, eds., *The Integration of Immigrants into American Society*.

to create robust communities of cooperation and resilience. Accordingly, increasing the success and speed by which immigrants integrate into American life enhances homeland security.

The United States has generally taken a laissez-faire approach to integration.[7] One area of inquiry that builds on this tradition concerns the use of elections as a possible vehicle for integration.[8] While prior explanations of integration tend to generally emphasize socioeconomic factors (such as income and level of education) as determinants of integration, research has yet to sufficiently explore alternative sources, such as civic and political participation, including how elections and voting can facilitate immigrant integration and the mechanisms contained therein.[9] In combining these branches of inquiry, this thesis explores an understudied area of homeland security and examines the relationship between voting and integration.

B. RESEARCH QUESTION

What is the relationship between participating in American elections, including voting, and integration into American society?

If a relationship exists, how does voting and electoral participation affect the integration process?

C. THE ARGUMENT

This thesis argues that electoral participation furthers integration for naturalized citizens.[10] As new citizens vote and participate in the electoral process, they become socialized to American civic norms associated with democracy and political activity. In

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7 Marc R. Rosenblum, and Wayne A. Cornelius, "Dimensions of Immigration Policy," in *The Oxford Handbook of The Politics of International Migration*, ed. Marc R. Rosenblum and Daniel J. Tichenor (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 257–8.

8 Waters and Pineau, eds., *The Integration of Immigrants into American Society*.

9 Waters and Pineau, eds., *The Integration of Immigrants into American Society*; see also David Scott Fitzgerald, "The Sociology of International Migration," in *Migration Theory: Talking Across Disciplines*, ed. Caroline B. Brettell and James F. Hollifield, 3rd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2014).

10 Further details concerning this project's theory of integration through elections is provided in Chapter III.

addition, political participation furthers integration through political parties and campaigns engaging with integrating citizens. As parties and candidates seek to win elections, there exists an inherent incentive for such actors to recruit members of immigrant communities to their campaigns. As campaigns and voters have ex-ante policy preferences, such engagements facilitate intersubjective encounters where integrating citizens and campaigns may learn about and accommodate each other's preferences in order to achieve electoral victory. Consequently, integration proceeds through integrating individuals being recruited within the party system, and through parties accommodating integrating members' interests into their political platform(s).

D. A NOTE ON ASSIMILATION AND INTEGRATION

Assimilation and integration broadly refer to the same general phenomenon.[11] In the past, assimilation was operationalized for arguably inappropriate purposes, including "forced assimilation," "Americanization," and other means of compelling immigrants to shed their ethno-cultural identity in favor of conformity with the American mainstream.[12] Given that prior definitions and actions taken in the name of assimilation contained controversial assumptions, policymakers and scholars instead tended to refer to integration to speak about the incorporation of immigrants into American society while appreciating their cultural backgrounds and contributions to the mainstream.[13] For purposes of conceptual continuity, this thesis adopts integration as the primary referent to the process by which an individual becomes part the community in their new home country. Assimilation will be used only when required to explain a particular theory or body of literature, including the particular arguments advanced by their authors.

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11 Fitzgerald, "The Sociology of International Migration," 118–19.

12 Fitzgerald, 118; see also Rosenblum and Cornelius, "Dimensions of Immigration Policy"; Tichenor, *Dividing Lines*; and William Lloyd Warner and Leo Srole, *The Social Systems of American Ethnic Groups* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1945).

13 Fitzgerald, "The Sociology of International Migration," 118.

E. RESEARCH DESIGN

This project adopted a two-stage mixed methods research design, following the principles of nested analysis.[14] Nested analysis combines a large-N analysis (LNA) with a small-N analysis (SNA), where N refers to the size of the sample.[15] While nested analysis often employs a combination of quantitative and qualitative analyses, it is not required.[16]

Nested analysis begins with a preliminary LNA, with the purpose being to evaluate a given theory or hypothesis (the baseline model). The results of the LNA, regardless of outcome, are then used in a subsequent SNA.[17] The SNA engages in either a model-testing (mt-SNA) or model-building (mb-SNA) exercise.[18] The decision of whether to engage in model-testing or building is dependent on the results of the prior LNA: where the LNA results support the baseline model, that is, where the results fail to reject the null hypothesis, the SNA proceeds with model-testing; alternatively, where the LNA results do not support the baseline model, SNA proceeds with model-building to diagnose and identify how the baseline model may be adjusted to provide a better explanation of the phenomena under study.[19]

In this project, I used data from the U.S. Census Current Population Survey (CPS), Voting and Registration Supplement to engage in a preliminary LNA evaluating the relationship between voting and integration.[20] The CPS dataset contains information pertaining to the voting characteristics of the U.S. population, including rates of voting and registration. The dataset also contains information concerning commonly used measures

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14 Evan S. Lieberman, "Nested Analysis as a Mixed-Method Strategy for Comparative Research," *American Political Science Review* 99, no. 3 (August 2005): 435–52, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055405051762.

15 Lieberman.

16 Lieberman.

17 Lieberman.

18 Lieberman.

19 Lieberman; an additional LNA may be incorporated into the research design following the model-building SNA.

20 "Current Population Survey Supplement: Voting and Registration: 2018," The United States Census Bureau, accessed May 15, 2020, https://www.census.gov/data/datasets/time-series/demo/cps/cps-supp_cps-repwgt/cps-voting.html.

of integration (including education and household income), as well as demographic indicators of respondents, such as ethnicity and whether respondents are naturalized or native citizens. Due to resource constraints, the LNA analyzed the CPS data using descriptive statistics to assess for a relationship between voting and integration, that is, whether an increase in voting among naturalized citizens corresponded with an increase in income and/or education, as compared to their native citizen counterparts. While descriptive statistics are limited insofar as their ability to establish causality, descriptive statistics were sufficient for purposes of evaluating the overarching hypothesis concerning whether a relationship exists between voting and integration.

The SNA for this project drew upon a case study of ethnic Somalis in the Minneapolis metropolitan area. The Minnesota Somali community is noteworthy, given its relatively recent establishment in the United States (attributed to the early 1990s), and the challenges the community has faced in its efforts to integrate in the United States.[21] The community is additionally noteworthy for its vulnerability to radicalization and recruitment by foreign terrorist organizations.[22] Leveraging prior research on this community, including voting patterns and other integration-related data, the SNA highlighted the challenges and progress the community experienced with respect to integration. More importantly, the case study showed how increased electoral participation, as manifested through voter mobilization and party recruitment campaigns, facilitated later improvements in integration.

F. THESIS OUTLINE

The following five chapters explain how electoral participation facilitates integration in the United States. Chapter II provides a literature review of the prominent theories and explanations of integration. The chapter highlights new assimilation theory

21 Hudda Ibrahim, *From Somalia to Snow: How Central Minnesota Became Home to Somalis*, Kindle Edition (Edina, MN: Beaver's Pond Press, 2017); additional information concerning case selection, including reasons for selecting the Minnesota Somali community, is available in Chapter V.

22 Scott E. Mulligan, "Radicalization within the Somali-American Diaspora: Countering the Homegrown Terrorist Threat" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2009), http://hdl.handle.net/10945/4479.

(NAT) as the guiding framework for the project, not because of its purported superiority over other approaches, but instead due to its applicability for the given research question and context of analysis.[23] Chapter III proceeds by building a theory of integration through elections, highlighting how participating in the electoral process facilitates integration by inculcating civic norms congruent to what is widely recognized within the American mainstream. Participating in elections, broadly defined, socializes naturalized citizens to civic norms associated with voting and democracy. Elections additionally facilitate integration through political campaigns recruiting integrating citizens to vote for their candidates and/or policy positions, and, at times, accommodating immigrant community interests into their platform. As consequence, integrating citizens and their subsequent generations become part of a wider community with shared interests and corresponding values.

Moving to empirical analysis, Chapter IV evaluates a theory of integration through elections within a preliminary LNA. Using descriptive statistical analysis of aforementioned CPS data, the results of the LNA show voting to be positively associated with measures of integration, including education and income. Given that the results of the LNA support the baseline theory concerning integration through voting, Chapter V proceeds with a mt-SNA using the Minneapolis Somali community as a case study. The results of the mt-SNA suggest that the Somali community's political engagement, particularly following the 2006 Primary and General Elections, furthered the community's integration within Minneapolis and the United States. While the Somali community remains insufficiently integrated, and as the results from the analysis are not determinative, the findings lend support to this project's theory of integration through elections.

Chapter VI concludes by summarizing the findings of the project, as well as by discussing policy implications. The chapter provides research and policy recommendations for furthering integration among immigrant communities, as well as for advancing knowledge on the study of integration in the United States.

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[23] See Richard Alba and Victor Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream: Assimilation and Contemporary Immigration* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005).

II. ASSIMILATION AND INTEGRATION THEORY: BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE

Assimilation and integration remain contested concepts for multiple reasons. Disciplinary conventions across academic fields incentivize usage of "assimilation" or "integration" within their respective communities.[24] Additionally, competing definitions of assimilation and integration present a challenge for scholars to communicate findings and research in a consistent manner.[25] Relatedly, such differing definitions are often operationalized within competing models of assimilation, with various schools of thought emphasizing different and, at times, incompatible drivers and obstacles to integration.[26]

This chapter reviews assimilation theory as viewed through the predominant models informing the literature. Beginning with classical assimilation theory and its core assumptions concerning the linear progression of integration by immigrants into the social mainstream, this chapter proceeds by noting alternative explanations to assimilation theory, including segmented assimilation and transnationalism. Third, this chapter highlights the most recent revision to this body of literature through new assimilation theory, including its foundations within new (historical) institutionalism. Lastly, this chapter notes a perennial challenge of linking theory to praxis, as highlighted in the 2015 National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) report on integration in the United States. As this chapter will show, the NASEM report provides a comprehensive empirical review of integration in the United States. However, while the report makes many suggestive findings concerning drivers of integration, its conclusions are limited as it does not incorporate theory to explain how each of the observed proxy indicators of integration work in concert with other variables to determine whether integration is "working" in the

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24 Fitzgerald, "The Sociology of International Migration," 118; Niklas Harder et al., "Multidimensional Measure of Immigrant Integration," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 115, no. 45 (2018): 11484, https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1808793115.

25 Harder et al., 11483.

26 Fitzgerald, "The Sociology of International Migration"; and Susan K. Bean and Frank D. Brown, "Assimilation Models, Old and New: Explaining a Long-Term Process," Migration Policy Institute, October 1, 2006, https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/assimilation-models-old-and-new-explaining-long-term-process.

United States (i.e. that immigrants are integrating into American society at a sufficient pace).

While this chapter compares competing explanations of integration, the purpose of comparison, in this regard, is not to determine which theory is best or superior; instead, the purpose is to highlight the contributions each theory provides to the issue concerning immigrant integration, and to identify outstanding gaps in understanding this complex phenomenon. It is also worth noting the inherent limitations of any theory or model of assimilation. Theories, in general, provide three things to researchers: (1) an explanation about a particular process or phenomena; (2) a prediction about how things will work in the future; and (3) prescription(s) about the best course of action one should take.[27] Ideally, theories seek to maximize their contributions in all three criteria. In practice, however, the strengths of theories will vary by how well they explain, predict, and/or prescribe. Theories inherently serve as abstractions or approximations of reality, and as heuristic devices for scholars and policymakers to aid in understanding the complex processes that assimilation entails. In other words, the salience and efficacy of a theory is dependent on the research question being asked as well as context in which it is studied.[28]

A. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON INTEGRATION

As a useful starting point for the trajectory of assimilation and integration research, it is perhaps appropriate to note the seminal work of researchers most associated with classic assimilation theory (CAT). CAT first emerged in the early 20th century through the works of Robert Park and Ernest Burgess, and later built upon by William Warner and Leo Srole, as well as Milton Gordon.[29] Park and Burgess first defined assimilation as "a process on interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories,

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27 Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994); Henry E. Brady and David Collier, eds., *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*, 2nd ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2010).

28 Rudra Sil and Peter J. Katzenstein, "Analytic Eclecticism in the Study of World Politics: Reconfiguring Problems and Mechanisms across Research Traditions," *Perspectives on Politics* 8, no. 2 (June 2010): 411–31, https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592710001179.

29 Robert Ezra Park and Ernest Watson Burgess, *Introduction to the Science of Sociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1924); and Warner and Srole, *The Social Systems of American Ethnic Groups*.

sentiments, and attitudes of other persons or groups, and, by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life."[30] CAT assumed that immigrants inherently wished to assimilate into their host society.[31] As advanced by its adherents, including those noted above, CAT argued that individuals emigrating to other countries, including the United States, were willing to shed their former identities and work towards fitting within the American mainstream, conceptualized as an objective homogenous entity.[32] Thus, CAT argued that the conclusion of assimilation was convergence with the host country's cultural mainstream, treated as a homogenous whole.[33] As noted by Fitzgerald in his survey of CAT, a common assumption within this camp was that assimilation for immigrant groups proceeded only in one direction towards complete assimilation, even if incrementally and across multiple generations.[34]

CAT succeeded by offering a rather parsimonious and teleological explanation of assimilation. However, its simplicity, in arguing for inevitable convergence between host and immigrant society, was problematic. When applied in a U.S. context, CAT's generalizations of the assimilation/integration process discounted the ethno-cultural backgrounds of immigrants in favor of conformity with the prevailing culture in the United States, which in the early and mid-20th century tended to treat the American mainstream as analogous to White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant society.[35] In addition, as Alba and Nee note in their critique of CAT, its assumption that the mainstream remained static over time did not stand in the face of evidence to the contrary.[36]

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30 Park and Burgess, *Introduction to the Science of Sociology*, 735; cited in Fitzgerald, "The Sociology of International Migration," 124.

31 Fitzgerald, 124–8; Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream*, 1–6.

32 Warner and Srole, *Social Systems of American Ethnic Groups*; and Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life*.

33 Warner and Srole, *Social Systems of American Ethnic Groups*.

34 Fitzgerald, "The Sociology of International Migration," 124–28.

35 Fitzgerald, 124–25; Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream*, 3–5; see also Ben Feldmeyer, "Classical Assimilation Theory: A Controversial Canon," in *The Routledge Handbook on Immigration and Crime*, ed. Holly Ventura Miller and Anthony Peguero (New York: Routledge, 2018), 35–48.

36 Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream*, 4–5.

In spite of its limitations, CAT remains a noteworthy approach to the study of integration. It provided a seminal contribution to the field that served generate further discussion and insights concerning the integration process, as noted below. It is also noteworthy that CAT continues to be referenced by immigration scholars as a baseline to measure other theories' contributions.[37]

B. CHALLENGES TO ASSIMILATION

Since the emergence of CAT as a branch of study within immigration studies, several alternative explanations challenged its dominance.[38] This section highlights two schools of thought that were notable for challenging CAT and providing popular alternatives: segmented assimilation and transnationalism.[39]

1. Segmented Assimilation

Segmented assimilation is most associated with the work of Alejandro Portes.[40] Segmented assimilation challenged CAT's assumption that assimilation occurred inevitably and proceeded unidirectionally.[41] Portes and others argued that the speed and direction by which assimilation proceeds is a function of multiple factors, including race and ethnicity.[42] Segmented assimilation notes the disparities in success among different immigrant groups integrating into their new host societies, thus noting that assimilation can proceed in a segmented fashion, and not linearly, as advocated by CAT.[43] For example, while immigrants with Western European ethnic backgrounds have tended to successfully

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37 Fitzgerald, "The Sociology of International Migration"; Bean and Brown, "Assimilation Models, Old and New"; Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream*.

38 Fitzgerald; Bean and Brown.

39 Fitzgerald; Bean and Brown.

40 Alejandro Portes and Min Zhou, "The New Second Generation: Segmented Assimilation and Its Variants," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 530, no. 1 (1993): 74–96, https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716293530001006; Alejandro Portes, Patricia Fernández-Kelly, and William Haller, "Segmented Assimilation on the Ground: The New Second Generation in Early Adulthood," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28, no. 6 (2005): 1000–1040, https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870500224117.

41 Portes and Zhou; Portes, Fernández-Kelly, and Haller.

42 Portes and Zhou; Portes, Fernández-Kelly, and Haller.

43 Fitzgerald, "The Sociology of International Migration," 128.

integrate into the American mainstream, other ethnic groups, most notably Afro-Caribbean immigrants, have encountered substantive challenges to assimilation.[44] Seeking to answer this inconsistency, Portes and Rumbaut argued that racial and ethnic discrimination affect certain groups' integration experience, including downward integration, that is, integration into a permanent underclass.[45] As noted by Fitzgerald, segmented assimilation holds that "immigrants can assimilate not only toward native whites but also toward marginalized native minority groups, thus forming part of a 'rainbow underclass.'"[46] Bean and Brown additionally note that segmented assimilation "focuses on identifying the contextual, structural, and cultural factors that separate successful assimilation from unsuccessful, or even 'negative' assimilation."[47]

Segmented assimilation contributes to a broader understanding of integration by acknowledging the differences with which different groups integrate into American society, as well as explains how race and class present obstacles to cohesive integration among all immigrant groups. Its application, however, generally remains limited to accounting for instances of unsuccessful integration.[48] Segmented assimilation additionally tends to reify race by operationalizing native White identity as the "touchstone" by which all other racial groups are compared.[49]

2. Transnationalism

Given advancements in travel, communication, and commerce, individuals who migrate to another country increasingly retain social networks in their country of origin while building new networks in the host country.[50] Transnationalism accepts these

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44 Fitzgerald, 128.

45 Alejandro Portes and Rubén G. Rumbaut, *Legacies: The Story of the Immigrant Second Generation*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); see also Portes and Zhou.

46 Fitzgerald, "The Sociology of International Migration," 128.

47 Bean and Brown, "Assimilation Models, Old and New."

48 Fitzgerald, "The Sociology of International Migration," 130–31.

49 Fitzgerald, 130–31; Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream*, 8; on the fluidity and evolution of race as a concept, see Bruce Baum, *The Rise and Fall of the Caucasian Race: A Political History of Racial Identity* (New York: New York University Press, 2008).

50 Fitzgerald, "The Sociology of International Migration."

advancements and presents a model of assimilation whereby individuals concurrently navigate integration within two or more mainstreams.[51] Proponents of transnationalism, such as Basch, Schiller, and Blanc, tend to reject the dichotomy of being either in or out of a given national mainstream.[52] They instead view assimilation as a cross-national phenomenon, where individuals retain their cultural identity as there does not exist a unique mainstream toward which they must integrate.[53] Individuals may possess dual or multiple nationalities, and may furthermore conduct business and commercial activity (including sending remittances) across international boundaries.

One unique characteristic of transnationalism is the plurality of views contained within this school of thought. It may be reasonable to organize transnationalism into two branches.[54] One branch, exemplified in the works of Basch, Schiller, and Blanc, argued that assimilation theory was incompatible to the aforementioned assumptions of transnationalism, including the notion that migrants can have substantive ties outside their new home country.[55] The other branch instead argued that transnationalism could be compatible with other approaches in the assimilation literature.[56]

Transnationalism contributes to assimilation theory by noting that the links migrants have from their countries of origin do not necessarily dissolve upon entry to a new host country. Instead, immigrants can and do retain ties to communities in their former countries, and can thus navigate within and between two (or more) mainstreams. In sum, transnationalism reminds scholars that assimilation does not occur in a vacuum. Instead,

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51 Fitzgerald, "The Sociology of International Migration," 131–35; and Bean and Brown, "Assimilation Models, Old and New."

52 Linda G. Basch, Nina Glick Schiller, and Cristina S. Blanc, *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments, and Deterritorialized Nation-States* (Amsterdam: Gordon and Breach Publishing Group, 1994).

53 Fitzgerald, "The Sociology of International Migration," 131–35.

54 Fitzgerald.

55 Basch, Schiller, and Blanc, *Nations Unbound*.

56 Peggy Levitt, *The Transnational Villagers* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Robert C. Smith, *Mexican New York: The Transnational Lives of New Immigrants* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006); and Emi Tamaki, "Transnational Home Engagement Among Latino and Asian Americans: Resources and Motivation," *International Migration Review* 45, no.1 (2011): 148–73, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-7379.2010.00842.x.

assimilation can be one part, among others, in an individual's efforts in navigating their way in a new community.[57]

C. NEW ASSIMILATION THEORY

Responding to many salient challenges levied against CAT, Alba and Nee advanced a new model of integration that accounted for contingency in the integration process (i.e. that integration did not necessarily advance in a linear fashion, as its predecessor generally argued), and incorporated elements of new institutionalist theory with particular emphasis on path dependence and institutions as aids in decision-making with imperfect information.[58] Path dependence generally refers to a core assumption within historical institutionalism that argues that institutions remain relatively resilient to change, undergoing incremental and evolutionary change over time.[59] Defining institutions, March and Olsen note,

> An institution is a relatively enduring collection of rules and organized practices, embedded in structures of meaning and resources that are relatively invariant in the face of turnover of individuals and relatively resilient to the idiosyncratic preferences and expectations of individuals and changing external circumstances.[60]

Within historical institutionalism, institutions proceed by undertaking gradual change until reaching an inflection point or "critical juncture," whereby the institution undergoes significant and relatively rapid change.[61] After the critical juncture ends, the

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57 Fitzgerald, "The Sociology of International Migration," 132.

58 Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream*; on new institutionalism, see James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, "The New Institutionalism: Organizational Factors in Political Life," *American Political Science Review* 78, no. 3 (1984): 734–49, https://doi.org/10.2307/1961840; James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, "Elaborating the 'New Institutionalism,'" in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions*, ed. R. A. W. Rhodes, Sarah A. Binder, and Bert A. Rockman (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 3–20; see also Peter A. Hall, and Rosemary C.R. Taylor, "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms," *Political Studies* 44 (1996): 936–957.

59 March and Olsen, "Elaborating the 'New Institutionalism.'"

60 March and Olsen, "Elaborating the 'New Institutionalism,'" 3.

61 Elizabeth Sanders, "Historical Institutionalism," in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions*, ed. R. A. W. Rhodes, Sarah A. Binder, and Bert A. Rockman (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 39–55.

institution proceeds along a new trajectory generally resilient to change until encountering another critical juncture in the future.[62]

In new assimilation theory (NAT), Alba and Nee highlight the role of "bounded rationality," conceptualized as the manner in which individuals make decisions based on limited information, with material and non-material interests (e.g., traditions, norms, and cultural obligations) guiding such decisions.[63] Alba and Nee additionally note that NAT incorporates nuance and context in an attempt to avoid overly-simplistic assumptions of its predecessor, particularly concerning the unidirectionality and inevitability of assimilation.

Alba and Nee define assimilation as "the decline of an ethnic distinction and its corollary cultural and social differences."[64] Correspondingly, the authors define the mainstream as "that part of the society *within* which ethnic and racial origins have at most minor impacts on life chances or opportunities."[65] As opposed to a deterministic theory that posits the inevitability of assimilation, Alba and Nee characterize NAT as a "framework" for understanding the different paths assimilation may take, influenced by four mechanisms: purposive action, network mechanisms, forms of capital, and institutional mechanisms.[66] First, purposive action refers to individuals indirectly assimilating into the mainstream through their deliberate acts in improving their social and economic standing in their new communities.[67] For example, seeking to increase social mobility (such as getting a job or engaging in commerce), immigrants may learn or encourage their children to learn the predominant language in a given area. Thus, while learning the local prevalent language is a means to obtain a sustainable livelihood and guard against falling into poverty, it produces spill-over effects, including an ability to communicate with others in the community and engage with civil society. It is not to

62 March and Olsen, "The New Institutionalism"; Hall and Taylor, "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms"; and Sanders, "Historical Institutionalism."

63 Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream*, 36–38.

64 Alba and Nee, 11.

65 Alba and Nee, 12, emphasis in original.

66 Alba and Nee, 35–39.

67 Alba and Nee, 39–42.

suggest that immigrants avoid consciously assimilating in their new communities; instead, NAT notes that assimilation occurs indirectly through immigrants' pursuit of material goods and socioeconomic improvement in the host country.

Second, NAT also notes how network mechanisms aid immigrants' abilities to assimilate, as well as constrain their behaviors through collective norms and expectations.[68] For example, Alba and Nee note that collective actions by previous immigrant groups in the United States were enforced through norms and logics of appropriate behavior, as established among members of the given group.[69] In other words, immigrant communities may shape the direction and nature of assimilation through shared norms and expectations about other group members' behavior. Third, NAT emphasizes forms of capital as influencing the manner and rate in which one assimilates in their new host community.[70] Forms of capital may be reasonably conceptualized as the amount of wealth a given individual has at their personal or collective disposal. Wealth and assimilation can be reasonably viewed as an intuitive relationship. All else equal, more wealth and resources increase one's likelihood to successfully integrate, as manifested through educational opportunities, the capacity to learn the predominant language, likelihood of increasing social mobility, among other mechanisms. The corollary of forms of capital additionally holds that individuals with fewer resources are less likely to succeed at integrating, for opposite reasons as described above. Fourth, NAT notes institutional mechanisms as affecting the rates and direction of assimilation, primarily observed through rules, laws, and regulations of the host-country.[71] A notable example of institutional mechanisms affecting assimilation can be observed through the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 which, by imposing significant immigration restrictions on Chinese immigrants, additionally restricted the ability of Chinese nationals and Chinese-Americans to assimilate in the United States.[72]

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68 Alba and Nee, 42–46.

69 Alba and Nee, 42–46.

70 Alba and Nee, 47.

71 Alba and Nee, 50–51.

72 Alba and Nee, 51–52.

NAT is noteworthy for its flexibility in responding to many rightly noted criticisms of CAT. Rather than presenting a deterministic approach to integration, NAT instead advances a framework for understanding how and why integration proceeds in certain ways among certain immigrant groups, but not in similar ways among other groups. Others have noted, however, that NAT's generalized approach to assimilation and integration causes it to become an unfalsiable theory.[73]

For the purposes of this thesis, I adopt a pluralist approach to integration that emphasizes using the most appropriate theory for a given problem or puzzle.[74] Given the exploratory nature of this project, NAT provides a sufficient theoretical foundation for the study of integration and its relationship to voting. However, this thesis additionally acknowledges the contributions made by segmented assimilation and transnationalism, given their arguments concerning divergent patterns of integration across ethnic/racial groups and the manner in which individuals may exist in multiple mainstreams, respectively. In other words, this project adopts NAT as a conceptual framework, as opposed to an inflexible approach, in studying the integration process. This thesis additionally notes the effects that race and class have in affecting the direction and nature of integration among different immigrant groups, while also noting that immigrants seeking integration into American society may navigate other mainstreams rooted in their countries of origin.

D. VOTING AND INTEGRATION IN THE UNITED STATES

A perennial challenge for scholars in any given field is linking theory to practice. Within integration research, applying theory to empirical studies is further challenging, given the ontological gap between understanding how integration proceeds and observing its advancement in an individual or group. Integration within the national mainstream cannot be directly observed, as integration encompasses personal and intersubjective

73 Bean and Brown, "Assimilation Models, Old and New"; see also Portes, Fernández-Kelly, and Haller, "Segmented Assimilation on the Ground."

74 Sil and Katzenstein, "Analytic Eclecticism in the Study of World Politics."

processes, including elements of identity formation.[75] Consequently, documenting integration tends to rely on proxy-variables (such as income, employment status, occupation, fluency in local dominant language, etc.) to estimate the direction and rate at which integration proceeds. The use of proxy-variables to estimate rates of integration can be problematic, however, if data is overgeneralized without accounting for fact that the use of proxy-variables is used in an estimative capacity, and not to be confused with precise measurement.

In practice, researchers tend to operationalize a select set of proxy-variables to observe assimilation. For example, the 2015 NASEM report concerning integration in the United States highlights common variables for tracking the rate and direction of assimilation across immigrant communities, with particular emphasis on the aforementioned proxy variables, including level of education, income, social mobility, health and longevity, and English fluency.[76] The NASEM report serves as an influential summary concerning the state of integration in the United States.[77] However, what is particularly noteworthy about the 2015 NASEM report is that it includes "political integration," including voting, as part of the overall integration process in the United States.[78] While prior studies have explored the relationship between electoral participation and integration, the issue remains generally unexplored in the United States.[79]

As a function of political integration, the NASEM report notes that voting can serve as a measure of political integration in the United States.[80] This is an intuitive relationship:

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75 For additional information on this subject, see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2016); on social identity and its formation, see Michael A. Hogg, "Social Identity Theory," in *Understanding Peace and Conflict through Social Identity Theory: Contemporary Global Perspectives*, ed. Shelley McKeown, Reeshma Haji, and Neil Ferguson (New York: Springer, 2016), 3–17; and Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: Anchor, 1966).

76 Waters and Pineau, *The Integration of Immigrants into American Society*.

77 Waters and Pineau.

78 Waters and Pineau, 159–160.

79 Jeremy Ferwerda, Henning Finseraas, and Johannes Bergh, "Voting Rights and Immigrant Incorporation: Evidence from Norway," *British Journal of Political Science* 50, no. 2 (2018): 713–30, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123417000643.

80 Waters and Pineau, 196–99.

as initial generations of citizens become more integrated into American society, they tend to participate in U.S. elections and politics, as compared to lesser-integrated individuals. However, beyond positing the existence of this relationship, the NASEM report provides no further information concerning voting's relation to integration, including whether voting may be considered a cause or an effect of integration. Consequently, there remains a gap in knowledge concerning the role that political participation has with respect to integration.

E. CONCLUSION

This chapter has surveyed the extant literature on integration in order to identify the contributions and limits each theory holds in their efforts to explain the phenomena of integration. Segmented assimilation, for example, emphasizes the role that race and class have in affecting rates of integration. NAT attempts to correct the limits of its predecessor while also acknowledging the influence of norms and institutions. Transnationalism's inquiry concerning the artificiality of borders highlights that individuals may integrate into and away from more than one social mainstream. Despite such contributions, however, research remains limited by competing definitions of integration and assimilation, thus challenging scholars' ability to accumulate knowledge about this phenomenon.[81]

This chapter additionally highlights the state of integration studies by noting an understudied area: voting and integration in the United States. While prior research suggests an intuitive relationship between voting and integration, this relationship remains undefined. Accordingly, further research is required to ascertain whether voting drives integration, or whether integration instead drives voting behavior. This thesis takes on this unresolved question in the proceeding chapters by building a theory of integration by voting, and analyzing the impact, if any, that voting has with respect to integration.

81 Harder et al., "Multidimensional Measure of Immigrant Integration."

III. ELECTIONS AS A VEHICLE FOR INTEGRATION

Prior research suggests an inherent relationship between integration and political participation.[82] However, this relationship remains to be further investigated. In surveying the state of affairs concerning integration in the United States, Waters and Pineau's edited volume treats voting and electoral participation as a proxy marker for integration, following what may be reasonably considered as common conventions within studies of integration and assimilation.[83] While political participation, including voting, can serve as a marker of integration, it is worth problematizing this relationship to assess for whether integration advances political participation, or instead whether political participation furthers one's integration into American society.

This chapter proposes a theory of integration through elections. In brief, this chapter posits that naturalized citizens can advance their integration in American society by participating in the electoral process, including voting. Voting is an inherent function of multiple processes, including campaigning, voter registration, voter education, and other related processes. Accordingly, a theory of integration through elections includes these constitutive processes leading up to an individual's act of voting on election day. Rather than viewing an individual's participation in elections (including voting) as an indication of integration, participation in the electoral process instead acts as a causal mechanism advancing one's integration in American society. Through repeated iterations of voting in both local and national elections, naturalized citizens can advance their integration in their local communities.

A. ELECTIONS AS UNIQUE OPPORTUNITIES FOR FACILITATING INTEGRATION

Elections in the United States serve as unique opportunities for advancing integration for a variety of reasons. Adopting a classical view of democracy, elections serve to mobilize citizens to educate themselves about candidates seeking particular offices, as

82 Waters and Pineau, eds., *The Integration of Immigrants into American Society*.

83 Waters and Pineau, 181–84.

well as well as other various issues being considered in a given ballot.[84] Elections in the United States frequently combine national, state, and local elections, thus presenting citizens with an opportunity to influence all levels of government. Consequently, individuals may further their integration through a kind of spill-over effect in determining who they prefer to represent their interests at the local, state, and national level.[85]

Second, elections are also opportunities for electoral campaigns to educate voters to support and vote for their particular candidate or issue. While campaigns are seeking to maximize their share of the vote through canvassing and voter-education drives, they also (intentional or otherwise) have an inherent incentive to recruit and expand their voting coalition. Naturalized citizens provide an untapped source of votes for such campaigns. For any campaign (national, local, or otherwise) to discount the interests of newcomers into American society would be at their peril, given competing campaigns seeking to maximize their vote share at the same time. All else equal, campaigns have an incentive to at least consider recruiting citizens that have not yet fully integrated into American life. In this model, campaigns can recruit citizens through various means, including canvassing, advertising, endorsements from persons of influence, campaign rallies, having campaign principals give public speeches, and generating news interest in their campaign, among others. Recruitment can include various mechanisms, such as educating voters as to how their issue or candidate may benefit an individual or their local community, either by improving their quality of life or achieving particular policies of interest. For example, campaigns and their candidates may explain that their policies and positions will lead to more jobs and/or increased economic growth; they may also commit to a particular social issue of interest to the community, such as protecting the environment, religious freedom, family values (however defined), or other social cleavages within American society.

In certain situations, particularly those involving what may be colloquially considered as "immigrant communities" composed of significant proportions of newly-

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84 Robert A. Dahl, *A Preface to Democratic Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956); Robert A. Dahl, *On Democracy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998); see also Anthony Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, (Boston: Harper and Row, 1957).

85 Alba and Nee, 39–41.

naturalized citizens, recruitment may also involve adjusting a campaign's platform to accommodate the views and interests of that particular group.[86] In such situations, particularly when a given campaign succeeds in winning an election through recruiting immigrant communities within their coalition, integration may occur both ways: an individual can integrate within their community via pursuing their own political interests and identifying with a particular group or cause in pursuit of that objective, and the community can similarly integrate–in a more attenuated fashion relative to individual integration–towards with those with recent immigration history by accommodating and/or incorporating newcomers' interests as their own in pursuit of shared electoral objectives. An example of this can be seen through Tichenor's analysis of the relationship between immigration and politics (particularly organized labor) in the United States, including how at different times, parties' positions on immigration changed to accommodate their strategic interests in staying in power.[87] In sum, elections are important periods in which individuals outside the mainstream and their local communities have incentives to reach out to each other, learn about each other's interests (even if only based in narrow political objectives), and cooperate in a common cause to achieve collective interests.

Third, elections are unique situations where citizens engage in a performative act demonstrating their belonging in a democratic society.[88] Notwithstanding myriad differences among localities within the United States and the social characteristics that make them distinct, holding regular elections remains a core attribute throughout the country. Elections are events in which citizens collectively demonstrate civic values

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86 For examples of metropolitan areas with substantive foreign-born populations that may be reasonably considered as immigrant communities, see Migration Policy Institute, "U.S. Immigrant Population by Metropolitan Area," Migration Policy Institute, November 20, 2013, https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/us-immigrant-population-metropolitan-area; for additional information concerning countries of origin for various metropolitan areas, see Migration Policy Institute, "Top Immigrant Origins by Metropolitan Statistical Area," Migration Policy Institute, February 26, 2015, https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/top-immigrant-origins-metropolitan-statistical-area; for state and county-level data, see Migration Policy Institute, "U.S. Immigrant Population by State and County," Migration Policy Institute, February 4, 2014, https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/us-immigrant-population-state-and-county.

87 Tichenor, *Dividing Lines*; Martin, *A Nation of Immigrants*.

88 Staffan I. Lindberg, *Democracy and Elections in Africa* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006).

underpinning the American mainstream. Regardless of differences in ethnic identity, politics, and other matters, U.S. citizens are conditioned that elections are a regularly occurring feature, and that voting in elections is widely regarded as a civic duty. For example, the importance of voting in elections, as a civic obligation, is included as part of the naturalization exam for citizenship in the United States.[89] In particular, one question specifically references voting in national elections as a responsibility for citizens.[90] Another question effectively references participating in elections as a means of citizens "participating in their democracy."[91] Furthermore, differences between actual levels of voter turnout and Americans' professed level of turning out to vote further exemplify the norm of voting, whereby respondents often will indicate voting in elections, even if they did not, in order to satisfy societal preferences concerning voting.[92]

Given prior research associating voting with integration, as well as the foregoing discussion concerning elections and voter mobilization, it follows that elections contain the potential for actually advancing integration by incentivizing new generations of American citizens and their local communities to cooperate in pursuit of shared political objectives.[93] Naturalized citizens have an opportunity to learn about community interests through the election process, and to determine which candidates, political parties, and/or campaigns best represent their interests and policy preferences. Such individuals can pursue their interests through joining and/or aligning with existing campaigns, thus finding common

89 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, "Civics (History and Government) Questions for the Naturalization Test" (USCIS, January 2019), https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/USCIS/Office%20of%20Citizenship/Citizenship%20Resource%20Center%20Site/Publications/100q.pdf.

90 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Question 49.

91 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Question 55.

92 Ruth Igielnik, "Many Americans Say They Voted, but Did They?" *Pew Research Center Fact Tank* (blog), March 10, 2016, https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/03/10/many-americans-say-they-voted-but-did-they/; see also Michael Corbett, *American Public Opinion: Trends, Processes, and Patterns* (New York: Longman Pub Group, 1991); William Lyons and John M. Scheb, "Early Voting and the Timing of the Vote: Unanticipated Consequences of Electoral Reform," *State and Local Government Review* 31, no. 2 (Spring 1999): 147–52, https://doi.org/10.1177/0160323X9903100208; Allyson L. Holbrook and Jon A. Krosnick, "Social Desirability Bias in Voter Turnout Reports: Tests Using the Item Count Technique," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 74, no. 1 (Spring 2010): 37–67, https://doi.org/10.1093/poq/nfp065.

93 Waters and Pineau, eds., *The Integration of Immigrants into American Society*; see also Ferwerda, Finseraas, and Bergh, "Voting Rights and Immigrant Incorporation."

ground with other citizens and facilitating their integration into wider U.S. society. At the same time, citizens occupying the mainstream can similarly integrate with their naturalized counterparts.[94] Seeking to expand their voting coalitions, political parties and campaigns may incorporate citizens outside the mainstream by learning about their particular interests and preferences, as well as accommodating such interests into their campaigns, either through overlapping objectives, or through strategic concessions in pursuit of more important goals.[95] In such circumstances, integration occurs both ways: through new generations of citizens moving towards the mainstream, as well as through the mainstream (or at least particular strands of the mainstream) accommodating such previously non-integrated citizens.

B. HOW DEMOCRATIZATION APPLIES TO INTEGRATION

Current research suggests there exists an intuitive relationship between political participation (including voting) and integration.[96] Prior research concerning both democratization and regime-change provides useful insights for the study of integration. In many ways, achieving democracy involves two processes: a democratic transition from a non-democratic regime and its subsequent consolidation as a democratic system of rule. While seminal literature on the subject regarded transitions to democracy as particular moments in space and time, scholars were careful to note that transitions to democracy are not sufficient to achieve democracy and must be followed by a protracted consolidation phase, given concerns of democratic backsliding, or otherwise returning to non-democratic systems of rule.[97] This section considers two particular elements of the democratization literature: consolidation and democratization through elections.

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94 Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream*.

95 V.O. Key, *Politics, Parties, and Pressure Groups* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1964); Giovanni Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis*, (Colchester, UK: ECPR Press, 2005 [1976]); and Downs, *Economic Theory of Democracy*.

96 Waters and Pineau, eds., *The Integration of Immigrants into American Society*.

97 Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe C. Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986); and Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

1. Linking Democratic Transition and Consolidation to Integration

Integration may be reasonably compared to democratic transition and consolidation, insofar as both processes involve change and transformation from one system to another within a given society. For integration, individuals adapt and evolve to the host society's mainstream, which may involve learning about the various norms, rules, and traditions underpinning the host society. For both democratic transition and consolidation, citizens similarly adapt to changes in institutions, rules, and norms, albeit through a new system of governance. In a seminal text on the subject of democratization, O'Donnell and Schmitter noted that

> Democracy's guiding principle is that of *citizenship*. This involves both the *right* to be treated by fellow human beings as equal with respect to the making of collective choices and the *obligation* of those implementing such choices to be equally accountable and accessible to all members of the polity.[98]

Given democracy's inherent relationship to citizenship in this regard, O'Donnell and Schmitter's description provides a natural analogue to integration. Formalizing their definition of democratization, the authors continue,

> Democratization, thus, refers to the processes whereby the rules and procedures of citizenship are either applied to political institutions previously governed by other principles (e.g., coercive control, social tradition, expert judgment, or administrative practice), or *expanded to include persons not previously enjoying such rights and obligations* (e.g., nontaxpayers, illiterates, women, youth, ethnic minorities, foreign residents), or extended to cover issues and institutions not previously subject to citizen participation.[99]

Writing in another seminal text on the subject of democratic transitions, Linz and Stepan define democratic transitions procedurally, insofar as

> A democratic transition is complete when sufficient agreement has been reached about political procedures to produce an elected government, when a government comes to power that is the direct result of a free and popular vote, when this government *de facto* has the authority to generate new

98 O'Donnell and Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*, 7, emphasis in original.

99 O'Donnell and Schmitter, 8, emphasis added.

> policies, and when the executive, legislative and judicial power generated by the new democracy does not have to share power with other bodies *de jure*.[100]

Accordingly, democratic transition and integration both inherently refer to practices intended to expand social participation and inclusion among all members of the given country, such that everyone has a socially accepted and legitimate role as an equal member of the community.

Linz and Stepan characterized democratic consolidation as occurring only when democracy was considered "the only game in town."[101] This occurred in three parts: (1) behaviorally, where all major actors in the system do not seek to undermine, oust, or replace democracy, as well as where no actors seek to dissociate, secede, or invite foreign intervention to avoid participation in the democratic regime; (2) attitudinally, where public opinion accepts democracy as the appropriate and proper system of governance, and where antidemocratic attitudes comprise only a marginal presence in society; and (3) constitutionally, where government and non-government forces accept the new system as legitimate, including its rules, procedures, and institutions for resolving disputes and conflict.[102] This process of consolidating democracy involved more than the adoption of a new constitution and system laws, it further required societal changes in behavior and attitudes to ensure that democracy was viewed as the appropriate and legitimate system of rule in the country.[103]

Linz and Stepan additionally noted five interacting arenas that supported the consolidation of democracy, including civil society, political society, rule of law, state bureaucracy, and economic society.[104] While each arena was a necessary condition for consolidation, it is worth emphasizing civil society for purposes of integration. Using Linz and Stepan's definition of civil society as the "arena … where self-organizing groups,

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100 Linz and Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, 3, emphasis in original.

101 Linz and Stepan, 5.

102 Linz and Stepan, 6.

103 Linz and Stepan, 6.

104 Linz and Stepan, 7.

movements, and individuals, relatively autonomous from the state, attempt to articulate values, *create associations and solidarities*, and advance their interests," democratic consolidation inherently presupposes a sufficiently integrated society.[105] Combining principles of democratic consolidation with assimilation theory, democratic consolidation occurs when different portions of society integrate with each other, as well as when society as a whole sufficiently integrates towards a new (democratic) mainstream.[106]

In addition, Huntington famously argued that democratic consolidation occurred after experiencing a "two-turnover test" post-transition.[107] Huntington described the two-turnover test as an uninterrupted process in which

> if the party or group that takes power in the initial election at the time of transition loses a subsequent election and turns over power to those election winners, and if those election winners then peacefully turn over power to the winners of a later election.[108]

Conceding this process as a "tough test" of democratic consolidation, Huntington noted that countries and their respective regimes passing the two-turnover test demonstrated that both elites and the public sufficiently regarded democracy as the means to solve their political problems, as opposed to abrogating the democratic regime altogether.[109]

Returning to the subject of integration, both Linz and Stepan and Huntington effectively regarded consolidation as a process in which society moved from an authoritarian mainstream towards a democratic alternative. Given integration's emphasis on moving from one social mainstream to another, it is reasonable to regard democratization as sufficiently congruous to integration. Democratization does not imply greater social integration as compared to non-democratic alternatives; instead, much like Linz and Stepan's five arenas of democratic consolidation, where each component's shift to a democratic system of rule serves as a necessary condition for consolidation, one may

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105 Linz and Stepan, 7, emphasis added.

106 Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream*.

107 Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late 20th Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 266–67.

108 Huntington, 266–67.

109 Huntington, 267.

reasonably regard democratization as a type of integration process within a narrow political and social context. In sum, despite pertaining to different subject matter, democratization and integration involve shared social processes, thereby allowing insights from the field of democratization to be reasonably applied within the field of integration.

2. Democratization through Elections

Within the democratization literature, one particular branch problematizes elections and voting as causal forces for advancing democracy in a given country.[110] While elections had been previously considered synonymously with democracy (through what was regarded as "the electoralist fallacy"), other scholars instead argued that elections, within particular circumstances, could *cause* or facilitate democratization through repeated iterations, as well as through the performative acts of voters participating in otherwise non-democratic environments.[111] Additionally, elections have previously been regarded as the founding moment of democracy.[112] However, the end of the Cold War challenged these assumptions, given that authoritarian incumbents began using elections as vehicles to legitimize and perpetuate their rule within a façade of democracy.[113] Consequently, elections could no longer be considered synonymous with democracy.[114]

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110 Lindberg, *Democracy and Elections in Africa*; and Staffan I. Lindberg, ed., *Democratization by Elections: A New Mode of Transition* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009).

111 Lindberg, *Democracy and Elections in Africa*, 112; Staffan I. Lindberg, "The Surprising Significance of African Elections," *Journal of Democracy* 17, no. 1 (2006): 146–47, https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2006.0011; Amanda B. Edgell et al., "When and Where Do Elections Matter? A Global Test of the Democratization by Elections Hypothesis, 1900–2010," *Democratization* 25, no. 3 (2018): 422–44, https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2017.1369964; Michael Bernhard, Amanda B. Edgell, and Staffan I. Lindberg, "Institutionalising Electoral Uncertainty and Authoritarian Regime Survival," *European Journal of Political Research* 59, no. 2 (2020): 465–87, https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12355; on the electoralist fallacy, see Philippe C. Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl, "What Democracy Is. . . and Is Not," *Journal of Democracy* 2, no. 3 (1991): 75–88, https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.1991.0033.

112 O'Donnell and Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*; Linz and Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*.

113 Andreas Schedler, ed., *Electoral Authoritarianism: The Dynamics of Unfree Competition* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2006); Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes After the Cold War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

114 Levitsky and Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism*; Nic Cheeseman and Brian Klaas, *How to Rig an Election* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2019).

In non-democratic settings elections may still foreshadow democracy for various reasons, including emboldening the political opposition (particularly when inaugural elections demonstrate opposition competitiveness), as well as through habituating individuals to democracy and associated democratic norms, including the principle of popularly selecting leaders and government policies.[115] As Lindberg notes,

> Elections bring to the fore fundamental features of equal citizenship: the right to universal and equal suffrage, the right to choose between candidates and parties, freedom of opinion and voice, and the right to form and lead associations. These are rights and freedoms that the citizen encounters for the first time as a voter in conjunction with a country's first elections. Citizens are likely to be targeted by voter-education campaigns and messages conveyed by politicians, activists, and the media. As a result, citizens gain an awareness of their own roles as equal members of the sovereign power, endowed with rights to participate in the political process and to choose between alternatives under legitimate procedures. Once the election is over, many citizens retain this awareness; some may even become "norm entrepreneurs," transferring their awareness to others in the social sphere. *The empowerment that comes from voting has important implications beyond the political sphere*.[116]

By engaging in this kind of performative act mimicking what is practiced in established democracies, elections become a vehicle by which citizens can push for further electoral and democratic reform in their respective countries. Over the course of repeated election cycles, citizens leverage such established democratic norms to advocate and push for additional reform.[117] Ghana serves as a useful example to illustrate this point: given a problematic transition at the time of Ghana's 1992 founding elections (in which the political opposition claimed fraud and where the pre-transition incumbent remained in power), Ghana continued to hold regular elections.[118] By the third general election in 2000, the incumbent party not only lost the popular vote but conceded defeat to the opposition.[119]

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115 Lindberg, "The Surprising Significance of African Elections," 146–47.

116 Lindberg, 146, emphasis added.

117 Lindberg, 146.

118 Lindberg, 64–5, 181; see also Alex Kaakyire Duku Frempong, *Electoral Politics in Ghana's Fourth Republic: In the Context of Post-Cold War Africa* (Accra, Ghana: Yamens Press, 2012).

119 Lindberg, 82, 181.

By participating in elections, even in non-democratic environments, citizens become habituated to this mode of political participation and can leverage this experience in pursuit of increased rights and liberalization in their given country.[120]

Given prior findings suggesting that voting furthers democratization, such mechanisms may facilitate integration through the same social and norm-building effects contained in these processes.[121] As elections increase opportunities for individuals to learn about local, state, and national politics, as well as to socialize with other integrated citizens (either individually or even through political parties or campaigns), voting serves as an opportunity for naturalized immigrants and their successive generations to enter and participate within the American mainstream. In a similar fashion, voting also incentivizes the native or otherwise integrated population to accommodate immigrant populations for purposes of obtaining desired electoral outcomes. While voting is but one of many other means of advancing integration in the United States (e.g. education, marrying into native-born families, residing in heterogenous communities comprised of immigrant and native-born communities, etc.), voting remains as an understudied and alternative source.

C. BUILDING A THEORY OF INTEGRATION THROUGH ELECTIONS

Given the foregoing discussion linking democratization to a broader conversation of integration, this section proposes a theory of integration through elections, whereby individuals may advance integration by participation in the electoral process. As noted above, elections in the United States are a distinct period in which groups of individuals seek to advance their material interests and policy preferences. Before proceeding further, however, it worth noting certain assumptions with this model. As an abstraction of reality, any model or explanation will inherently make a number of assumptions.[122] Accordingly,

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120 Lindberg, *Democracy and Elections in Africa*.

121 Lindberg, *Democracy and Elections in Africa*; Lindberg, ed., *Democratization by Elections*; Edgell et al., "When and Where Do Elections Matter?"; and Bernhard, Edgell, and Lindberg, "Institutionalising Electoral Uncertainty."

122 Steve Smith, Ken Booth, and Marysia Zalewski, eds., *International Theory: Positivism and Beyond* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996); and Jonathon W. Moses and Torbjorn L. Knutsen, *Ways of Knowing: Competing Methodologies in Social and Political Research* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

this model concedes a number of working assumptions that may not directly accord with events in the real world, but may nevertheless aid in understanding the relationship between voting and integration, as well as help explain how the voting process facilitates integration into American society.

First, this model assumes that naturalized citizenship is an insufficient condition with respect to integration within the American mainstream." As Sumption and Flamm note in their report concerning the economic benefits of obtaining citizenship, "naturalization is … a tool that can be used to encourage and facilitate further integration — *a point along the journey rather than the culmination of the integration*."[123] To be sure, naturalized citizens comprise individuals who have obtained a minimum level of integration necessary to pass required examinations in English proficiency, U.S. history, and civics.[124] Naturalized individuals may also possess extensive residential history in the United States prior to naturalizing, thus affecting their rate and level of integration.[125] Additionally, it is possible that certain groups of U.S. immigrants can be socially and/or culturally integrated without necessarily possessing legal citizenship, such as permanent residents or other non-citizens with extensive residential history in the United States. However, it is anticipated that such exceptions will minimally impact the wider relationship concerning naturalization and integration. Naturalization is not synonymous with integration, as the former regards a legal condition and the latter a social condition. Therefore, naturalized citizenship, in isolation, shall be considered an insufficient condition for integration.

Second, the mainstream is conceptualized as a malleable social construction comprised of norms, traditions, institutions, and sets of rules that, in turn, define one's

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123 Madeleine Sumption and Sarah Flamm, *The Economic Value of Citizenship for Immigrants in the United States*, (Washington, DC.: Migration Policy Institute, 2012), 2, https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/citizenship-premium.pdf, emphasis added.

124 United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, "The Naturalization Test" (USCIS, April 27, 2019), https://www.uscis.gov/us-citizenship/naturalization-test.

125 Individuals seeking to naturalize are generally required to reside continuously in the United States for at least five years (excluding certain exceptions) before applying for naturalization; see United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, "Continuous Residence and Physical Presence Requirements for Naturalization" (USCIS, April 17, 2019), https://www.uscis.gov/us-citizenship/citizenship-through-naturalization/continuous-residence-and-physical-presence-requirements-naturalization.

identity as a member of the broader community within the United States.[126] Adopting Alba and Nee's definition of mainstream as "that part of society *within* which ethnic and racial origins have at most minor impacts on life chances or opportunities," the mainstream is not regarded as a fixed construct, but instead is flexible and evolves over time to accommodating groups of individuals (from different ethnic and geographic origins) so as to establish and reestablish an equilibrium that constitutes what it means to be a member of U.S. society.[127] In other words, integration within the mainstream is a two-way street involving members of the host society and newcomers seeking to become part of it, as Alba and Nee note that "the mainstream culture, which is highly variegated in any event—by social class and region, among other factors—changes as elements of the cultures of newer groups are incorporated into it."[128] Given the fluidity associated with this definition, a useful analogy may be to consider the integration within the mainstream as an ideal type, where individuals may progress towards complete integration, despite the evolving nature of the mainstream.[129]

Third, electoral campaigns and the principals leading such campaigns will generally seek to maximize their share of votes and coalition size in pursuit of their objectives. This is an intuitive assumption, as this model assumes candidates and electoral campaigns want to win with as many votes as possible. The corollary of this assumption is that campaigns seek maximum turnout and will not discourage, dissuade, or otherwise obstruct individuals and groups from turning out to vote. The history of voting rights in the United States demonstrates that certain political groups have, at times, sought to restrict and/or prevent groups of citizens from voting.[130] However, for the purposes of this theory,

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126 Stephen D. Krasner, "Structural Causes and Regime Consequences: Regimes as Intervening Variables," in *International Regimes*, ed. Stephen D. Krasner (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983), 1; see also Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*; Henri Tajfel, ed., *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

127 Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream*, 12, emphasis in original.

128 Alba and Nee, 13; see also Waters and Pineau, eds., *The Integration of Immigrants into American Society*, 19.

129 Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, Volume I, ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 6.

130 U.S. Department of Justice, "History of Federal Voting Rights Laws" (Department of Justice, July 28, 2017), https://www.justice.gov/crt/history-federal-voting-rights-laws.

competing parties and campaigns will be assumed to adhere to classic conceptualizations of democracy and elections.[131]

Fourth, this model assumes that individuals are self-interested rational actors that seek to advance their economic and material welfare. Following NAT, individuals engage in purposive action to increase their overall socioeconomic standing in society, including (but not limited to) obtaining increased income, advancing their (or their children's) education, expanding their social network, and/or residing in a nice neighborhood.[132] All else equal, individuals want more funds, goods, and services directed towards them and their family for purposes of increasing their social security and minimizing their risk of remaining or falling into poverty. Consequently, integration follows through individuals' principal pursuits in obtaining their material interests.[133]

Given these working assumptions, a theory of integration by voting emphasizes elections as periods in which naturalized and other insufficiently integrated citizens can advance integration through the pursuit of their material interests in the electoral arena.[134] Individuals choosing to participate in elections advance their knowledge about candidate and party platforms so as to make an informed choice about who they will support.[135] Additionally, campaigns—seeking to maximize the number of votes they receive in an election—similarly seek out supporters through canvassing and advertisements in order to recruit voting-eligible citizens to their side. In turn, campaign voting coalitions are incentivized to incorporate and expand their coalitions to both integrated and insufficiently integrated citizens (i.e. naturalized and second/third generation citizens). As a result of these interdependent circumstances, both types of citizens are encouraged to engage in social interaction in an environment where it otherwise would not have occurred. Interaction does not necessarily need to be face-to-face. Interaction may also occur through

131 Robert A. Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1972); Dahl, *On Democracy*; Key, *Politics, Parties, and Pressure Groups.*

132 Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American* Mainstream, 36–7, 39–41.

133 Alba and Nee.

134 Alba and Nee, 39–41.

135 Downs, *Economic Theory of Democracy*.

mutual recognitions of integrated and insufficiently integrated citizens comprising core constituencies of an election coalition. In a similar manner to Anderson's argument concerning how national identity may be formed through citizens' collective experience in reading the daily newspaper, it is reasonable to argue that collective identity can be shaped through the shared experiences of participants in an election campaign.[136]

In circumstances where political and policy interests align, integrating individuals succeed in joining the electoral campaign where they are inherently welcomed as constituent members of the voting coalition. In turn, the integrating individual and campaign have an interdependent stake in working together to achieve the intended election result. At times, an individual may adjust and/or abandon less-important material objectives to accommodate the campaign or group's shared overarching goals; at other times, particularly where the integrating individual may constitute an important sub-group within the electoral coalition, the campaign may be similarly compelled to adjust its proverbial sails to that of the integrating individual and/or subgroup in order to achieve its principal objectives. While it remains possible that a campaign could exclude integrating citizens from its voting coalition, either by design (e.g. far-right, xenophobic, and/or anti-immigrant parties) or as an unintended consequence of pursuing other desired policies (e.g. restricting immigration, establishing English as a national language, etc.) such circumstances would invite significant risk of electoral failure, given the concession of a group of voters to the electoral competition.

Consequently, regardless of electoral outcome, the integrating individual's act of voting serves as the culmination of a series of intercommunal exchanges resulting in greater understanding of the community interests. In turn, this greater understanding of community interests, including points of difference between segments of the community, assists individuals' integration into wider society when they return to the next round of elections and engage in additional iterations of intercommunal exchange in pursuit of shared material interests. Over the course of repeated elections, integrating individuals are expected to

136 Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 35–6; see also Berger and Luckman, *The Social Construction of Reality*.

succeed in establishing themselves in the mainstream, as they and the mainstream evolve and adjust to each other's preferences. Figure 9 provides a summary illustration of the cyclical and iterative nature of this process.

Figure 1. Simplified Voting Cycle.

While the mainstream is not expected to substantively change to each individual's interaction with its constituent members, it is nevertheless expected to make incremental adjustments by each interaction so that over time, the mainstream evolves into a substantively different version than its prior self. As an analogy, a pebble thrown into a river will not drastically alter its flow; however, given a sufficient number of pebbles, a river's course will change over time.

D. CONCLUSION

In sum, a theory of integration through elections assists in explaining how the voting process facilitates immigrant integration into the U.S. mainstream. Given that

elections are distinct periods in which political interests encourage citizen engagement and the formation of voting coalitions, elections provide a useful venue for naturalized citizens to engage and interact with others within the social mainstream. By explaining how integrating and integrated individuals can come to recognize their shared interests, coordinate their actions (through electoral campaigns), work together in pursuit of shared objectives, and adjust each other's subordinate objectives in pursuit of principal interests, a theory of integration through elections shows how the voting process may aid in the integration process. Evaluating the efficacy of this theory, as well as its ability to account for differences in integration outcomes, comprises the subject of the next two chapters.

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IV. VOTING AND INTEGRATION IN THE UNITED STATES: EVIDENCE FROM THE U.S. CENSUS

A theory of integration through elections provides scholars and policymakers additional insights about how newly-naturalized citizens can find their way in the United States, as well as become embedded within their new host society. As the general goal of integration is to provide a means for immigrants to become part of the overarching mainstream, and not part of a permanent subclass, it is worth exploring ways in which existing structures influence integration. At the same time, it is also worth cautioning employing an overt approach to integration, given prior attempts by the U.S. government to actively assimilate immigrants in a process that tended to discount cultural distinctions and contributions.[137]

The previous chapter posited a theory of integration through elections, particularly through voting. In brief, immigrants may further their integration into society by means of participating and voting in elections. The process of voting exposes immigrants to civic values as practiced in the United States, as well as the institutions that comprise local and national government. In sum, elections provide a hands-on approach for new citizens to participate as part of an "imagined community."[138]

This chapter evaluates a theory of integration through elections by drawing upon data from the U.S. Census Bureau. As part of its ongoing Current Population Survey (CPS), the Census Bureau publishes voting and registration data among identified U.S. citizens.[139] This chapter analyzes U.S. voting data among native-born and naturalized citizens to assess for a relationship between voting and integration. Given limitations in available data through the CPS Voting and Registration supplementary data, integration is assessed through household income and education. While these variables are imperfect measures of

137 Tichenor, *Dividing Lines*.

138 Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

139 U.S. Census Bureau, " Current Population Survey Supplement: Voting and Registration: 2018," The United States Census Bureau, accessed May 15, 2020, https://www.census.gov/data/datasets/time-series/demo/cps/cps-supp_cps-repwgt/cps-voting.html.

integration (as previously explained in Chapter II), they will be used as working proxy-variables approximating integration for the purposes of assessing whether a relationship exists between voting and integration.

A. THE CURRENT POPULATION SURVEY AND THE VOTING AND REGISTRATION SUPPLEMENT

The U.S. Census Bureau conducts the CPS. Every month, the Census Bureau obtains approximately 54,000 responses from the U.S. households across the country for the CPS.[140] Respondents are selected from an eligible pool of households identified through the decennial Census. among eligible households, respondents are selected for interview based on Census Bureau criteria to obtain a representative sample of the U.S. population.[141] In addition to ongoing data collection concerning employment and labor in the United States, the Census Bureau collects and publishes data concerning the voting and registration habits of U.S. citizens. Voting and registration data is collected every two years in November, using even years to follow patterns in U.S. elections.[142] Information collected through the CPS includes various items related to demographics (including citizenship), education, employment status, and position in the U.S. labor market.

Items collected by the Voting and Registration Supplement (hereafter "Supplement") include whether an individual voted in the November election and whether that individual was registered to vote.[143] In cases where an individual did not vote or was not registered to vote, the Supplement asks respondents follow-up questions to indicate reasons why they did not vote and/or register. Responses include multiple factors, ranging from forgetting to vote/register, being out of town on election day, as well as indicating feelings of disaffection (i.e. that their vote did not matter), among other responses.[144] Given

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140 U.S. Census Bureau, "Current Population Survey, November 2018 Voting and Registration Supplement" (Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018), Attachment 2, https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/techdocs/cpsnov18.pdf.

141 U.S. Census Bureau, "Current Population Survey," Attachment 2.

142 U.S. Census Bureau, "Current Population Survey," Attachment 7.

143 U.S. Census Bureau, "Current Population Survey," Attachment 7.

144 U.S. Census Bureau, "Current Population Survey," Attachment 3.

limitations in available data, the CPS Voting and Registration Supplement is the only available dataset providing national-level data on voting and electoral participation among naturalized and native-born U.S. citizens.

B. METHODOLOGY

Following Lieberman's nested analysis approach, this section explains the methods used to evaluate a theory of integration through elections.[145] While this analysis is unique insofar as it effectively evaluates a new theory of integration, nested analysis nevertheless provides a sufficient means of leveraging large-N and small-N approaches in an effort to assess the merits of this theory and its ability in explaining integration among naturalized U.S. citizens.

As previously noted in Chapter I, nested analysis begins with a baseline model, or in this case, the posited theory of integration through voting.[146] Next, the baseline model is evaluated through a large-N analysis (LNA) to assess for whether the theory works as expected across its population of interest. In this case, the population of interest comprises naturalized U.S. citizens. While quantitative analysis (e.g. regression analysis) can be used for the LNA, it is not required, as other means large-N methods can be used, including descriptive statistics in certain circumstances.[147] Given operational constraints that do not allow for quantitative analysis, this study uses descriptive statistics to evaluate the relationship between voting and integration. While descriptive statistics are limited by their ability to infer a causal relationship among a set of variables, such as linear or logistic regression, descriptive statistics can nevertheless illustrate the hypothesized relationship, as well as approximate what would have otherwise been obtained through advanced quantitative analysis. Given that the goals of the LNA remains modest in only assessing for a general relationship between voting and integration, descriptive statistics will be sufficient for the purposes of this study.

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145 Lieberman, "Nested Analysis as a Mixed-Method Strategy."

146 Lieberman.

147 Lieberman.

C. DATA ANALYSIS

Table 1 provides selected descriptive statistics of voting among naturalized and native-born citizens in the 2018 U.S. general election. The 2018 election was selected for analysis given its recency, as well as because it was a midterm election in which citizens voted for candidates and platforms unrelated to the presidency. In addition, given that midterm elections are generally observed to have less turnout than presidential elections, the 2018 election serves to provide recent data on voters that turned out to vote for reasons unrelated to who was running for president. Consequently, it is reasonable to assume that midterm voters would be increasingly likely to consistently vote in general elections compared to presidential election voters.

Table 1. Voting Patterns among Naturalized and Native Citizens in November 2018 Election.[148]

Nativity status, race, and Hispanic origin		United States citizen				
		Total Citizen Population	Reported voted		Reported not voted	
			Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Native citizen	All races	207,022	112,303	54.2	58,321	28.2
	White alone	168,406	93,680	55.6	47,453	28.2
	White non-Hispanic alone	149,884	86,591	57.8	40,122	26.8
	Black alone	26,974	13,742	50.9	7,076	26.2
	Asian alone	4,795	1,798	37.5	1,222	25.5
	Hispanic (of any race)	21,193	8,261	39.0	8,258	39.0
	White alone or in combination	172,046	95,450	55.5	48,710	28.3
	Black alone or in combination	28,544	14,392	50.4	7,675	26.9
	Asian alone or in combination	5,791	2,344	40.5	1,514	26.1
Naturalized citizen	All races	21,810	9,978	45.7	7,787	35.7
	White alone	12,116	5,575	46.0	4,144	34.2
	White non-Hispanic alone	5,098	2,485	48.7	1,549	30.4
	Black alone	2,785	1,453	52.2	852	30.6
	Asian alone	6,333	2,721	43.0	2,542	40.1
	Hispanic (of any race)	7,763	3,433	44.2	2,833	36.5
	White alone or in combination	12,348	5,666	45.9	4,248	34.4
	Black alone or in combination	2,878	1,495	52.0	899	31.2
	Asian alone or in combination	6,379	2,736	42.9	2,564	40.2
TOTAL		**228,832**	**122,281**	**53.4**	**66,109**	**28.9**

Notwithstanding concerns over the artificiality of using race as a category, the data nevertheless provide insights into rates of naturalized voting patterns.[149] Except for naturalized Whites, including either alone or in combination with other groups, all other naturalized citizens exhibit higher voting rates than their native-born counterparts. While

148 Adapted from U.S. Census Bureau, "Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2018," U. S. Census Bureau, accessed January 10, 2020, https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/voting-and-registration/p20-583.html.

149 Baum, *The Rise and Fall of the Caucasian Race*.

reasons for this discrepancy remain undetermined, the fact that voting is emphasized as an attribute of citizenship may partially explain this difference between naturalized and native-born voting patterns.[150] Unfortunately, limitations in available data and statistical software do not allow for more precise analysis of these differences in means. However, given that the sample includes what may be reasonably regarded as a significantly large number of respondents (consisting of at least 1,000 responses for each category), and that the pool of respondents is comprised as a representative sample of the U.S. population, it is reasonable to argue that these differences between native and naturalized citizens are significant. With few exceptions, the same pattern holds true for both voting and registration between 2012 and 2018: non-White naturalized citizens tend to register and vote at higher rates than their native-born counterparts (Table 2).[151]

150 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, "Civics (History and Government) Questions for the Naturalization Test."

151 U.S. Census Bureau, "Voting and Registration Tables," U.S. Census Bureau, accessed April 25, 2020, https://www.census.gov/topics/public-sector/voting/data/tables.html.

Table 2. Voting between Naturalized and Native Citizens, 2012–2018.[152]

Nativity status, race, and Hispanic origin		Reported Voted							
		2018		2016		2014		2012	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Native citizen	All races	112,303	54.2	126,763	62.1	85,667	42.7	123,654	62.5
	White alone	93,680	55.6	106,047	63.5	72,580	44.0	102,621	62.6
	White non-Hispanic alone	86,591	57.8	98,255	65.6	68,608	46.1	95,622	64.4
	Black alone	13,742	50.9	15,756	59.2	10,212	39.7	16,525	66.5
	Asian alone	1,798	37.5	1,778	44.7	818	22.6	1,351	43.9
	Hispanic (of any race)	8,261	39.0	9,040	45.5	4,528	24.2	8,130	46.1
	White alone or in combination	95,450	55.5	107,748	63.3	73,655	43.8	104,323	62.5
	Black alone or in combination	14,392	50.4	16,477	58.8	10,583	39.2	17,253	66.2
	Asian alone or in combination	2,344	40.5	2,238	47.1	1,099	25.1	1,743	45.9
Naturalized citizen	All races	9,978	45.7	10,774	54.3	6,584	34.1	9,294	53.6
	White alone	5,575	46.0	5,844	54.1	3,786	34.9	5,226	54.1
	White non-Hispanic alone	2,485	48.7	2,594	56.0	1,743	35.0	2,419	55.4
	Black alone	1,453	52.2	1,363	61.7	866	40.0	1,288	62.8
	Asian alone	2,721	43.0	3,265	51.8	1,758	29.8	2,553	49.3
	Hispanic (of any race)	3,433	44.2	3,642	53.4	2,248	35.2	3,058	53.6
	White alone or in combination	5,666	45.9	5,959	54.3	3,817	34.8	5,280	54.0
	Black alone or in combination	1,495	52.0	1,398	61.1	886	39.5	1,305	61.9
	Asian alone or in combination	2,736	42.9	3,305	51.9	1,785	30.0	2,588	49.4
TOTAL		122,281	53.4	137,537	61.4	92,251	41.9	132,948	61.8

Given data indicating a generally higher rate of turnout for non-White naturalized voters, as compared to their native-born counterparts, this information suggests that such groups may be increasingly likely to be further integrated than their non-voting or unregistered group members. Given the prior argument concerning how the election process incentivizes integrated and non-integrated individuals to work together to pursue

152 Adapted from U.S. Census Bureau, "Voting and Registration Tables."

shared political objectives (with spill-over effects comprising increased knowledge and understanding of each other's subordinate interests, norms, and traditions), it follows that naturalized individuals who turn out to vote are expected to have higher rates of integration than other naturalized citizens that either did not vote or register. In turn, if naturalized citizens that participate in elections and vote have increased levels of integration, such individuals should, all else equal, be more likely to have increased levels of income and education (as proxy-variables for integration) relative to their non-voting counterparts.

Table 3 provides data concerning levels of family income among naturalized citizens, based on voting and registration status. Figure 2 provides a visualization of the data. Comparing rates of voting and registration, it is worth noting a few observations. First, naturalized citizens that voted in the 2018 elections appear to have higher rates of family income compared to their counterparts with a few exceptions. Compared to non-voters, the positive relationship between voting and income (i.e. voting being positively associated with higher levels of family income) appears to be present only for persons whose family incomes comprise $50,000 or more per year. For incomes below $50,000 there does not appear to be a relationship between voting and family income. However, compared to unregistered naturalized citizens, there does appear to be a general relationship between registration and family income; in other words, registering to vote appears to be associated with higher family income.

Table 3. Family Income among Naturalized Citizens, November 2018 Election.[153]

Family Income	Voted	Did Not Vote	Not Registered	Total
Less than $5,000	40	48	31	119
$5,000 to $7,499	23	21	14	58
$7,500 to $9,999	49	55	37	141
$10,000 to $12,499	61	86	50	197
$12,500 to $14,999	56	64	41	161
$15,000 to $19,999	79	107	69	255
$20,000 to $24,999	90	134	87	311
$25,000 to $29,999	115	153	103	371
$30,000 to $34,999	154	148	103	405
$35,000 to $39,999	135	129	83	347
$40,000 to $49,999	211	206	143	560
$50,000 to $59,999	249	233	146	628
$60,000 to $74,999	306	268	173	747
$75,000 to $99,999	372	259	162	793
$100,000 to $149,999	509	283	166	958
$150,000 or More	623	289	143	1055
TOTAL	3072	2483	1551	7106

153 Adapted from U.S. Census Bureau, “Voting and Registration: 2018.”

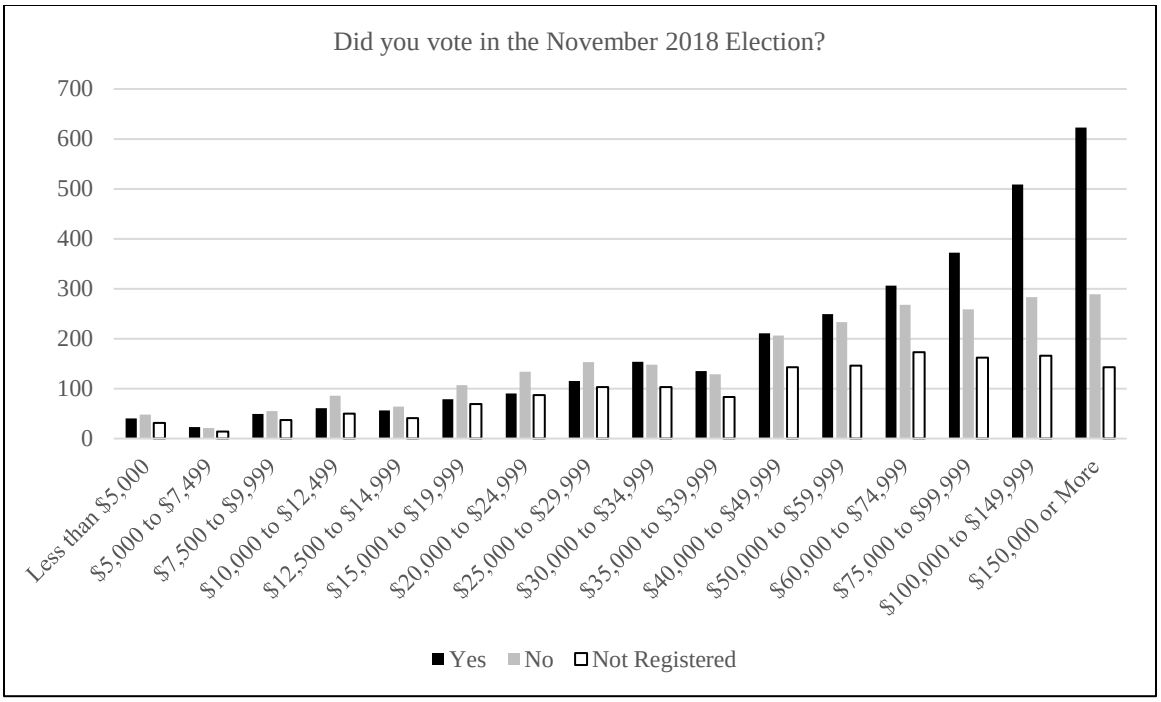

Figure 2. Family Income among Naturalized Citizens, November 2018 Election.[154]

Looking at other markers of integration, Figure 3 compares turnout between native-born and naturalized citizens, broken down by education. Turnout in this figure is assessed as a proportion of those indicating having voted against those in the same group that did not vote. The results highlight a number of observations. First, both naturalized and native-born citizens have proportionally higher turnout as their education increases. This association between education and turnout is intuitive, given that persons with more education are reasonably assumed to be more familiar with the electoral process and current events. Second, after successfully completing high school or its equivalent (resulting in a degree), native-born citizens appear to have a generally higher turnout rate compared to naturalized citizens, even as both groups increase turnout respective to education. Third, at lower levels of education, naturalized citizens have a higher proportion of turnout compared to native-born citizens. This may be due to a naturalization effect, whereby naturalized individuals who have undertaken requisite studies in civics for the

154 Adapted from U.S. Census Bureau, "Voting and Registration: 2018."

naturalization test may have an increased desire to vote compared to native-born citizens that may not have received specific civics lessons.[155] There may also be a novelty effect, given that adult naturalized citizens receive the right to vote through the naturalization process, whereas native-born citizens receive the right to vote as a formality upon reaching legal adulthood. Further research is required to explain the reasons for these patterns. However, while levels of turnout differ between native-born and naturalized citizens after completing a high school education, the trend between the two groups nevertheless remains similar: individuals with more education appear to have a higher rate of turnout compared to those with less education.

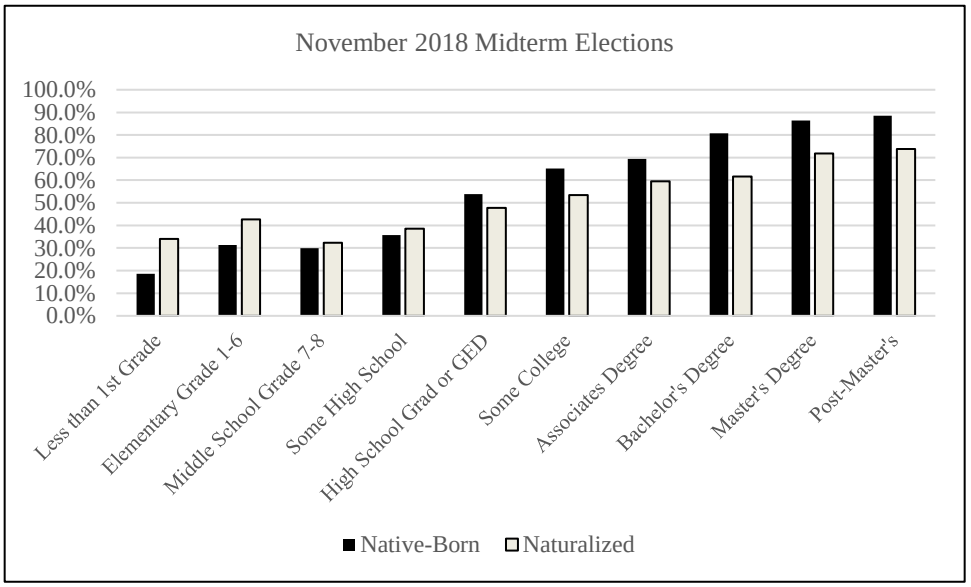

Figure 3. Reported Voting as Percentage among Naturalized and Native-Born Citizens, November 2018 Election.[156]

To be sure, it is possible that the rates of voting as expressed by respondents may not be accurate to actual voter turnout. As indicated in the prior chapter, there exists a social desirability effect (i.e. a norm) compelling persons to indicate having voted in an election,

155 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services," Civics (History and Government) Questions for the Naturalization Test."

156 Adapted from U.S. Census Bureau, "Voting and Registration: 2018."

even if they did not actually vote.[157] However, despite the potential for responses to be skewed towards having voted, it is reasonable to consider this bias as generally applicable across all demographics among native-born and naturalized citizens; that is, both native-born and naturalized citizens will have an equal desire to falsely claim having voted across all education levels, regardless of education or income-level. Accordingly, while the true magnitude of responses may vary across groups, the direction and trend across sub-categories can still be regarded as salient.

Given an observed association between education and income among voting naturalized citizens, further analysis shows that this relationship may be further contextualized by time. Using the same CPS data for the November 2018 midterm elections, Figures 4 and 5 show distributions of family income among naturalized citizens broken down by whether the respondent initially entered before or after 2000. Using an 18-year lead time as a baseline marker to assess for one's progress within one generation (in this case, from figurative birth to adulthood), the results highlight how the amount of time an individual has resided in the United States is associated with income and voting. In general, persons with more than 18 years residence in the United States (Figure 4) have a higher association between voting and income than those with 18 years or less (Figure 5). These findings suggest that at incomes over $30,000 per year, the longer one resides in the United States, the more likely they are to vote. As incomes increase among naturalized citizens with more than 18 years residence, the difference between voting and non-voting becomes increasingly distinct.

157 Igielnik, "Many Americans Say They Voted, but Did They?"; and Holbrook and Krosnick, "Social Desirability Bias in Voter Turnout Reports."

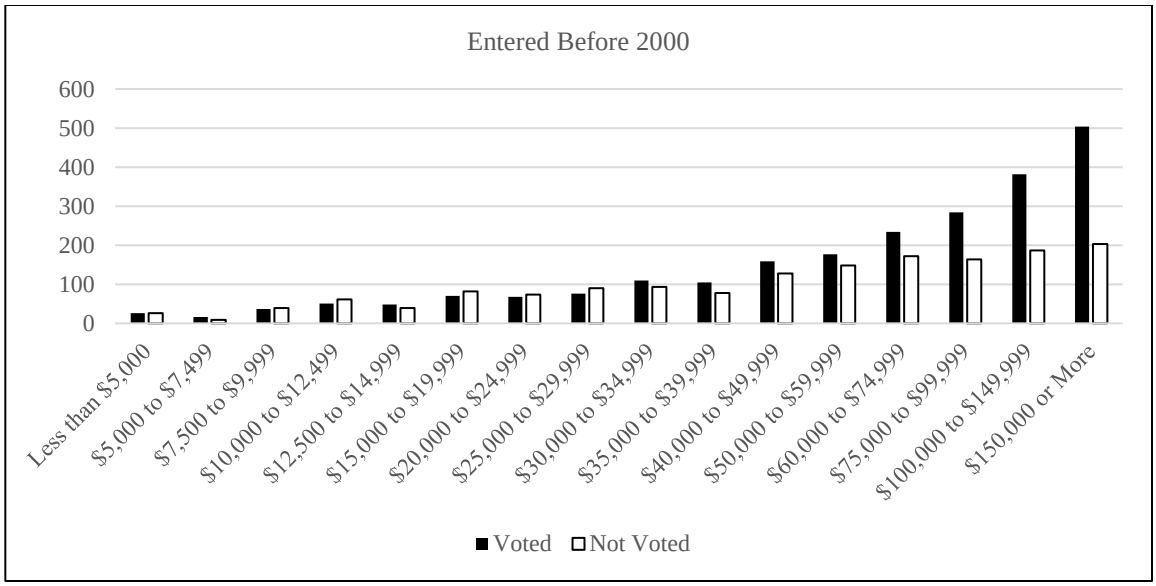

Figure 4. Family Income among Naturalized Citizens with Entry before 2000.[158]

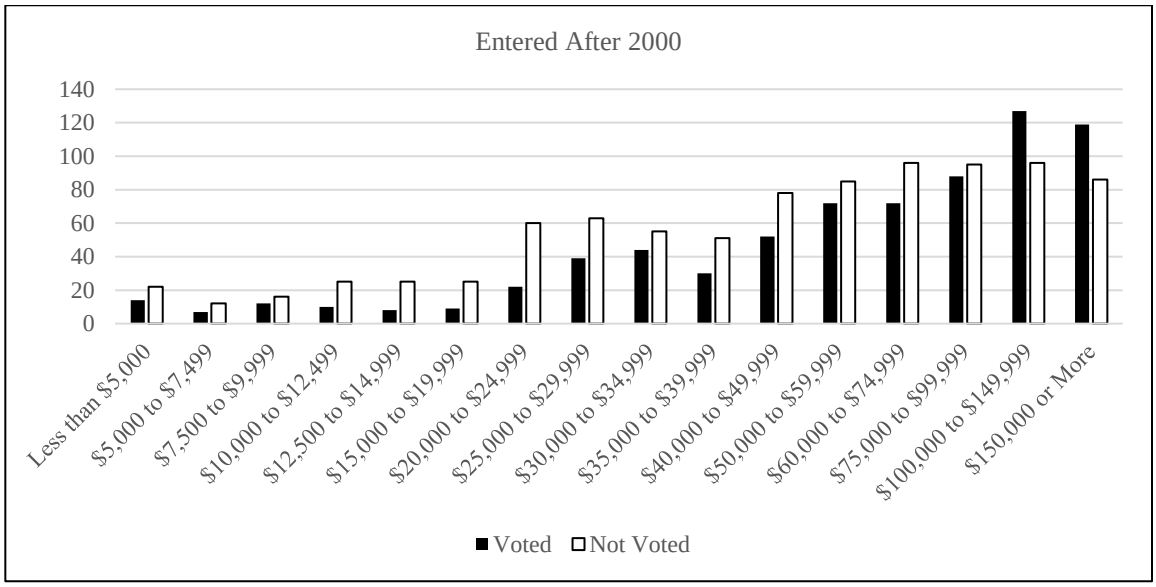

Figure 5. Family Income among Naturalized Citizens with Entry After 2000.[159]

158 Adapted from U.S. Census Bureau, "Voting and Registration: 2018."

159 Adapted from U.S. Census Bureau, "Voting and Registration: 2018."

Figures 6, 7, and 8 similarly illustrate the relationship between voting, time of residence, and income. However, the figures control for education by omitting potential outliers (such as those with advanced degrees or those with less than a high-school education), and focusing instead among naturalized citizens who have completed high school or college (i.e. those that obtained a secondary education certificate/diploma, as well as those who have obtained an associate's or bachelor's degree). After controlling for education, the data shows a similar pattern: individuals with residence for 18 years or more in the United States tend to have increased incomes and are more likely to vote than those with residencies of 18 years or less. However, it is important to note that this trend only appears to become evident at incomes of $30,000 or more per year.

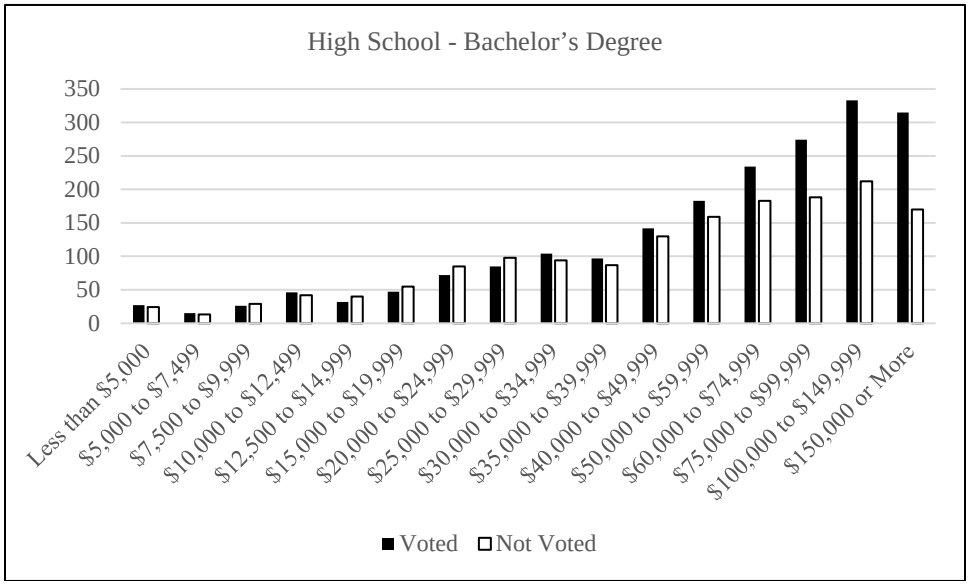

Figure 6. Family Income among Naturalized Citizens with Completed Education from High School Through College.[160]

160 Adapted from U.S. Census Bureau, "Voting and Registration: 2018."

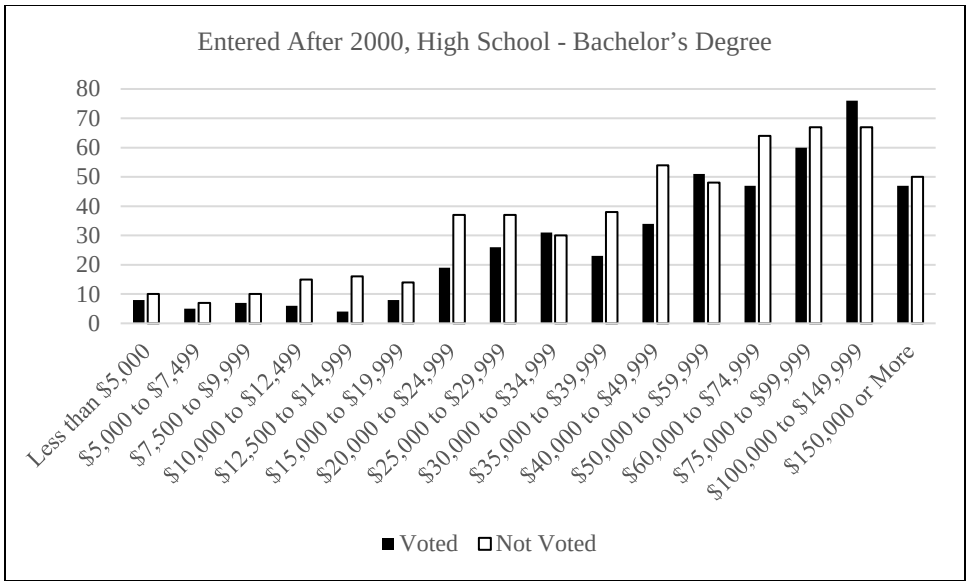

Figure 7. Family Income among Naturalized Citizens with Completed Education from High School Through College, Entered After 2000.[161]

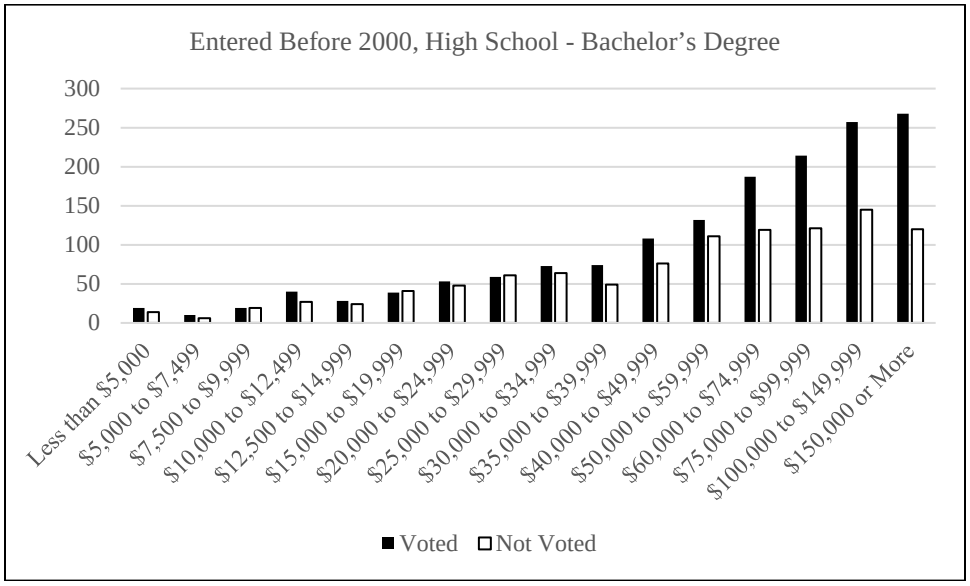

Figure 8. Family Income among Naturalized Citizens with Completed Education from High School Through College, Entered before 2000.[162]

[161] Adapted from U.S. Census Bureau, "Voting and Registration: 2018."

[162] Adapted from U.S. Census Bureau, "Voting and Registration: 2018."

Figures 9, 10, and 11 further explore education among naturalized citizens within the November 2018 election. In general, the data shows that naturalized citizens with bachelor's degrees appear to be most likely to vote. In addition, this relationship is further conditioned on when an individual first entered the country, as the effect is most pronounced among naturalized citizens with bachelor's degrees who entered prior to 2000.

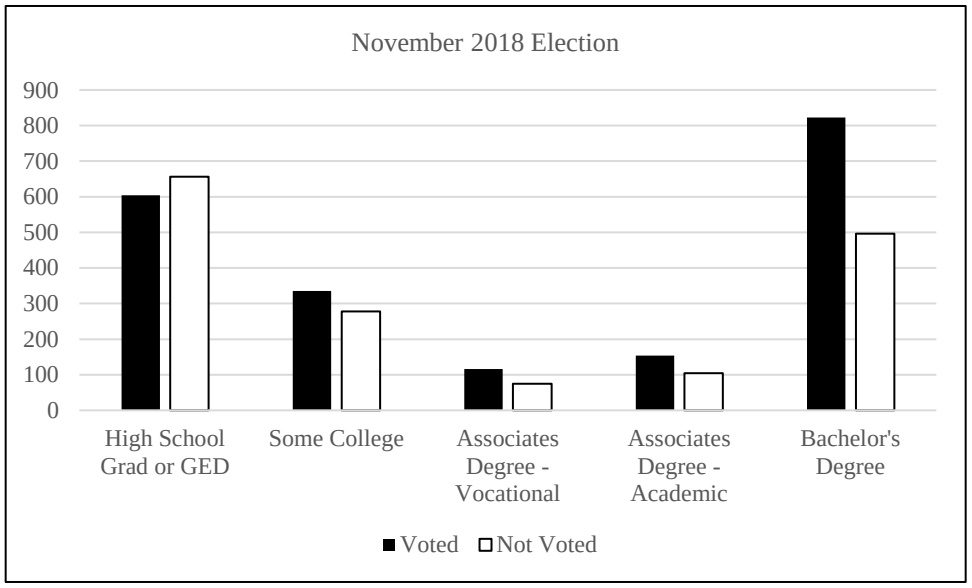

Figure 9. Education and Turnout among Naturalized Citizens, November 2018 Election.[163]

163 Adapted from U.S. Census Bureau, "Voting and Registration: 2018."

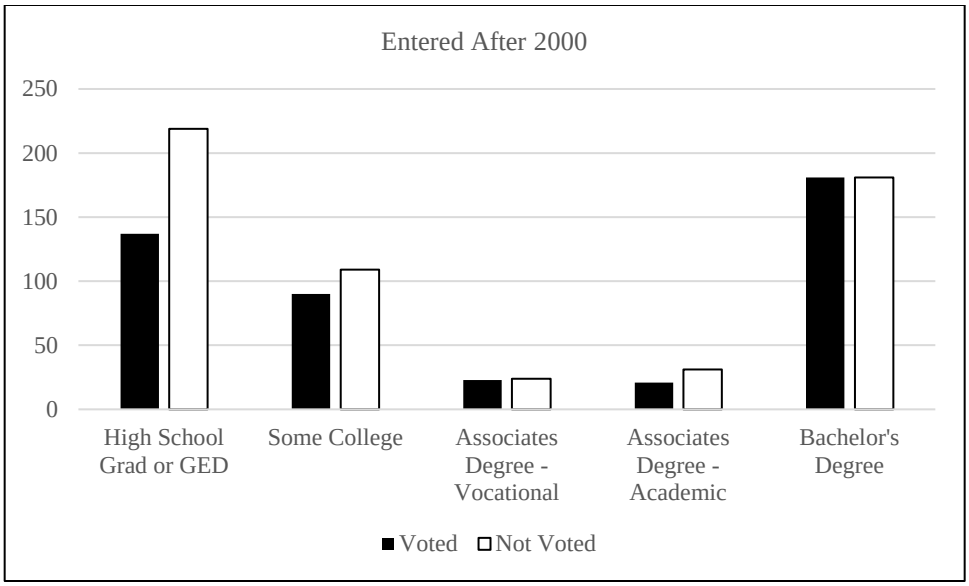

Figure 10. Education and Turnout among Naturalized Citizens with Entry After 2000.[164]

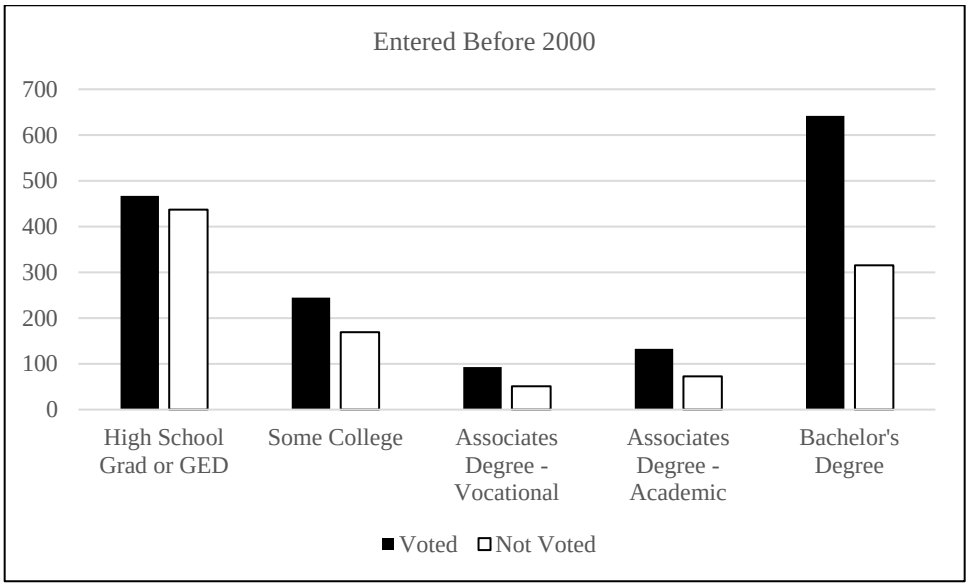

Figure 11. Education and Turnout among Naturalized Citizens with Entry before 2000.[165]

164 Adapted from U.S. Census Bureau, "Voting and Registration: 2018."

165 Adapted from U.S. Census Bureau, "Voting and Registration: 2018."

D. DISCUSSION

The foregoing analysis of the November 2018 CPS supplement provides a number of insights about the relationship between voting, education, and income. First, the data shows income and voting to be positively related among naturalized U.S. citizens: those that vote tend to have higher incomes than non-voters. However, the relationship between income and voting does not substantively manifest itself until reaching family incomes of $30,000 or more per year. After obtaining at least $30,000 annual income, the relationship between voting and income becomes more substantive as one moves towards higher annual income.[166]

Second, education and voting also appear to possess a positive relationship, albeit with a few qualifications. Naturalized citizens with bachelor's degrees and above tend to report voting, with increasing rates of turnout as education increases concomitantly. For those with less than a bachelor's degree, the relationship between education and voting appears less distinct.

Third, these associations between income, education, and voting appear further contingent on the amount of time a citizen has resided in the United States. Using the year 2000 as a working cutoff date to assess for the effect of time, the data shows that the above-mentioned relationships between education and income appear contingent on the amount of time an individual has resided in the United States. For those entering the United States before 2000, the relationships are more pronounced, whereas for those entering on or after 2000, the relationships are less clear. To be sure, the amount of time residing in the United States is not expected to operate as its own causal variable, but instead incorporates actions that over time may facilitate integration, such as deciding where to reside, where to work, and with whom to socialize. Additionally, the year 2000 is used as a proxy to distinguish between relatively recent and longstanding naturalized citizens. While variations in cutoff dates may more clearly define true boundaries between these two groups, the year 2000

166 A similar relationship generally holds for native-born U.S. citizens, excluding citizens born in Puerto Rico and other U.S. island areas; see U.S. Census Bureau, "Voting and Registration: 2018."

nevertheless demonstrates a generational effect at play with respect to voting and integration.

It is important to note that the November 2018 sample was selected so as to analyze voting responses among the set of voters that chose to turn out in a midterm election. Given widely known differences in turnout between voters in presidential and midterm elections, it is reasonable to argue that the subset of voters in the 2018 midterm likely contains a higher proportion of serial voters (that is, voters that turn out to vote in every election) than presidential election voters, such as those that turn out to vote every four years. Consequently, the findings are suggestive that regularly voting is associated with education and annual income. However, these suggestive findings are far from conclusive, and warrant further inquiry to disentangle regular voters from infrequent voters.

Given operational limitations with analyzing the CPS data, these findings should not be overgeneralized. While the findings are suggestive, they are derived from descriptive statistics and do not contain measures of statistical significance that would lend further weight to the argument concerning the relationship between voting and integration. However, given that the data is derived from the U.S. Census Bureau and is designed to be representative of the U.S. population, that the sample contained in the CPS November 2018 Supplement contains what may be reasonably regarded as a large sample with a sufficient number of respondents (excluding numbers of respondents among lowest annual incomes and education), that the descriptive statistics visually demonstrate substantive differences between voters and non-voters, and that the findings from this analysis were reserved for those instances where clear differences were present between the variables of interest, it is reasonable to conclude that there exists a relationship between voting and integration that merits further inquiry.

E. CONCLUSION

Given the modest goals this analysis set out to accomplish, this chapter provides additional insights concerning the relationship between voting and integration. While far from definitive, the findings in this chapter serve to evaluate whether a theory of integration through elections can withstand basic scrutiny through a review of data concerning the

voting habits of naturalized citizens. While data and operational limitations did not provide for a full assessment of the baseline theory's causal mechanisms within a large-N context, the findings from the LNA, using descriptive statistics, nevertheless accord with what a theory of integration through elections expects. In other words, the findings fail to reject the underlying hypothesis concerning the positive relationship between voting and integration, as captured through education and income. It is important to note, however, that failing to reject is not synonymous with proving something to be true, as the nature of social science does not prove hypotheses, but instead determines whether they can be rejected as false.[167]

In spite of these limitations, this analysis contributes to further understanding the relationship between voting and integration. With respect to integration among naturalized citizens, this analysis additionally shows how income and education are conditioned by the amount of time an individual has resided in the United States. While the analysis did not specifically include second and third generation citizens in its sample of respondents, as the findings among first-generation citizens indicate a relationship between voting and markers of integration, it is reasonable to consider that recent generations of non-integrated citizens may experience similar effects.

Despite modest findings from this analysis, the findings nevertheless advance current knowledge on the relationship between voting and integration. Given Waters and Pineau's prior argument concerning an intuitive relationship between voting and integration, this analysis provides additional clarity on this relationship, and thus serves to advance current understanding on the subject.[168] However, additional analysis is necessary to disentangle the relationship between time and voting: that is, whether regularly voting over time facilitates integration, as opposed to simply residing in the United States for a prolonged period of time. Voting in elections may facilitate integration as the baseline theory expects. However, voting may also be endogenous to other factors facilitating integration, either as an instrumental variable (that is, a variable that is endogenous to a

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167 On the nature of social science and hypothesis testing, see King, Keohane, and Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry*; and Brady and Collier, eds., *Rethinking Social Inquiry*.

168 Waters and Pineau, eds., *The Integration of Immigrants into American Society*.

prior variable, and who's effect is transferred through voting in a sequence of events), or through a selection effect whereby voting is an unassociated consequence of some other independent factor advancing integration.

Such concerns, among other items related to investigating the relationship between voting and integration, comprise the subject of the next chapter. As a mt-SNA, Chapter V provides additional clarity on the causal mechanisms linking voting to integration as experienced through Minnesota's ethnic Somali community. This analysis not only evaluates whether participating in elections is associated with integration, but additionally evaluates whether voting acts as an independent variable on integration, or instead serves as a side-effect of another process.

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V. VOTING AND INTEGRATION AT THE LOCAL LEVEL: EVIDENCE FROM IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES IN MINNEAPOLIS

The previous chapter highlighted the relationship between voting and integration in the United States. Using proxy variables of education and family income for integration, the results of that analysis suggested a positive relationship between voting and integration; that is, that increased rates of voting were associated with increased rates of education and family income, with certain exceptions. These findings accord with what a theory of integration through elections expects. In accordance with nested analysis, this chapter builds on the prior chapter's large-N analysis (LNA) by engaging in a small-N analysis (SNA) that evaluates the salience of this project's argument concerning elections and integration.[169]

In particular, this chapter engages in a model-testing analysis of integration through elections. This chapter additionally adopts the case study method as a model-testing SNA (mt-SNA) in order to assess for the presence of hypothesized causal mechanisms linking participation in elections as a driver of integration, as opposed to an effect.[170] Given that the prior LNA identified a general relationship that failed to reject the baseline theory's hypothesis concerning voting and integration (albeit through descriptive statistics, due to limitations in available resources), it is thus appropriate to continue evaluating whether a theory of integration through elections aids in explaining integration in the United States.

This chapter highlights Minnesota's ethnic Somali community, and in particular, the Minneapolis Somali community. Minnesota's Somali community best approximates Gerring's definition of an influential case.[171] Gerring defines influential cases as those that

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169 Lieberman, "Nested Analysis as a Mixed-Method Strategy."

170 Paul D. Leedy and Jeanne Elis Ormrod, *Practical Research: Planning and Design*, 12th ed. (New York: Pearson, 2019), 230–1; and Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005).

171 John Gerring, "Case Selection for Case-Study Analysis: Qualitative and Quantitative Techniques," in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*, ed. Janet M. Box-Steffensmeier, Henry E. Brady, and David Collier (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 656–9, https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199286546.003.002.

"cast doubt" on a given theory, thus warranting additional examination.[172] While Gerring's typology of case selection presupposes ex-ante available data on the independent and dependent variables of interest, and as an exhaustive search for data concerning different immigrant communities in the United States remained unavailable, Minnesota's Somali community serves as an alternative yet influential case for its notability as an established immigrant community in the United States.

Minnesota's Somali community additionally serves as a compelling case for investigating integration due to recurring yet unfounded allegations that the community contains links to homeland security threats, including terrorism.[173] This is an arguably unique feature distinct from other immigrant communities, given that the Somali community comprises an ethnic and religious minority in the United States.[174] Consequently, due to such differences in ethnicity and faith, Somalis in the United States arguably face an increased difficulty in integrating in the United States relative to other immigrant communities.[175]

This chapter uses Minneapolis' Cedar-Riverside neighborhood as a proxy for Minnesota's Somali community. Limitations in available data do not allow for a comprehensive examination of Minnesota's Somali community. However, given the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood's association as being considered the cultural center of the Minnesota Somali community, it is reasonable to extrapolate integration-related developments within the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood to the wider community. In the context of assessing whether electoral participation corresponds to integration, this chapter analyzes the neighborhood's electoral participation within its congressional district in order

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172 Gerring, 657.

173 Maegan Vazquez and Betsy Klein, "Trump Targets Somali Refugees During Minnesota Rally," CNN, October 11, 2019, https://www.cnn.com/2019/10/10/politics/donald-trump-campaign-rally-minnesota/index.html; see also Associated Press, "Things to Know About Somalis in Minnesota," Fox News, September 19, 2016, https://www.foxnews.com/us/things-to-know-about-somalis-in-minnesota; it is additionally noteworthy that such concerns also include fears over Somali immigrants' abilities to integrate in the United States.

174 Robert D. Putnam and David E. Campbell, *American Grace: How Religion Divides and Unites Us*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2012).

175 Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream*.

to assess for whether and how the community's electoral participation affected its integration trajectory.

This chapter also highlights the Somali community's political participation as manifested through elections to the U.S. House of Representatives. Minnesota's Fifth Congressional District (Fifth District) contains the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood. Given noteworthy developments occurring within the Fifth District, including the election of Representative Keith Ellison in 2006 and Ilhan Omar in 2018, this chapter explains that Ellison's strategy in expanding voter outreach to the Somali community in and around 2006 facilitated further participation from the Somali community. This led to increased representation by and attention from major political parties, and the candidacy and success of Omar (as the first Somali-American to be elected to Congress) in 2018. While not dispositive, and as the Somali community continues to experience challenges to integrating within the American mainstream, the findings from this chapter lend additional support to considering political participation as furthering integration.

A. THE MINNEAPOLIS SOMALI COMMUNITY

Minnesota contains the country's largest ethnic Somali community.[176] The Minnesota State Demographic Center, using data from the U.S. Census' American Community Survey, estimates that in 2018 approximately 58,000 persons resided within Minnesota that claimed Somali ancestry.[177] Within Minnesota, the majority of the Somali community resides in Minneapolis.[178] One report estimates that over 30,000 ethnic Somalis reside in the area surrounding Minneapolis and St. Paul.[179] As previously noted, the Cedar-

176 Associated Press, "Things to Know About Somalis in Minnesota"; see also Ibrahim, *From Somalia to Snow*.

177 "Immigration and Language," Minnesota State Demographic Center, accessed October 9, 2020, https://mn.gov/admin/demography/data-by-topic/immigration-language/.

178 Maya Rao, "How Did the Twin Cities Become a Hub for Somali Immigrants?" *Star Tribune*, June 21, 2019, https://www.startribune.com/how-did-the-twin-cities-become-a-hub-for-somali-immigrants/510139341/.

179 "Groups at a Glance: Somali Foreign-Born Population," Minnesota Compass, accessed July 10, 2020, http://www.mncompass.org/immigration/groups-at-a-glance-somali.

Riverside neighborhood in Minneapolis is considered the center of the Somali community, sometimes referred to as "Little Mogadishu."[180]

Somalis began first arriving in Minnesota in the early 1990s.[181] Largely due to the Somali government's collapse and ensuing civil war, the United States first resettled Somali refugees throughout the United States, with particular interest in resettling refugees with diverse communities at the time, such as San Diego.[182] However, subsequent to arriving in the United States, many first-arriving Somali refugees subsequently traveled to Minnesota for available work, particularly in the state's meat-processing industry.[183] Minnesota first began receiving Somali refugees directly by 1993.[184] Over time, through the successes of the early generations of Somali refugees finding sustainable livelihoods, along with the state's previous success in hosting refugee populations (notably, the Hmong), Minneapolis became a central node for the Somali community in the United States.[185]

As noted above, Minnesota's Fifth Congressional District includes Minneapolis' Cedar-Riverside neighborhood. Utilizing 2018 U.S. Census data, the Fifth District contains approximately 718,802 persons.[186] Within the Fifth District, approximately 17 percent identify as Black or African American. Approximately 15 percent of the District identifies as foreign-born. Approximately eight percent identifies Sub-Saharan African as their ancestry. In 2018, the unemployment rate for the Fifth District was 4.1 percent, median

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180 Alexia Fernandez Campbell, "America's Real Refugee Problem," *The Atlantic*, October 24, 2016, https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2016/10/the-challenge-of-integrating-americas-refugees/505031/; see also Associated Press, "Things to Know About Somalis in Minnesota."

181 Rao, "How Did the Twin Cities Become a Hub for Somali Immigrants?"; Campbell, "America's Real Refugee Problem"; for additional details on Somali immigration to the United States, see Ibrahim, *From Somalia to Snow*, Chapter 2.

182 Rao, "How Did the Twin Cities Become a Hub for Somali Immigrants?"

183 Rao.

184 Rao.

185 Rao.

186 The following statistics for Minnesota's Fifth Congressional District are derived U.S. Census Bureau, "My Congressional District: Congressional District 5 (116th Congress), Minnesota," accessed June 14, 2020, https://www.census.gov/mycd/?st=27&cd=05.

income comprised $65, 782, and 47.8 percent of District respondents obtained a bachelor's degree or higher in educational attainment.

In comparison, the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood contains approximately 10,065 residents as of 2018.[187] Approximately 51 percent of residents identify as Black or African American.[188] 2018 median income for the neighborhood comprised approximately $24,944, with approximately 73 percent of households earning $35,000 or less. Within the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood, 24.4 percent indicate having a bachelor's degree or higher, along with 13.1 percent indicating unemployment, as of 2018.

In comparing recent data from the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood against the wider Fifth Congressional District, it is evident that residents in the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood fare less well than their Fifth District counterparts by education and income. Given the reasonableness to use the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood as a proxy for the Somali community, and applying general principles from NAT (including forms of capital and purposive action, by means of advancing individual and group socioeconomic status), this suggests that the Somali community is insufficiently integrated compared to their Fifth District counterparts, with implications to the wider United States.[189] However, while the Minneapolis Somali community remains insufficiently integrated, at least in terms of educational and income parity with the wider Minneapolis community, it remains possible to assess the community's trajectory over time, as well as assess for whether changes in voting patterns correspond to changes in the community's integration.

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187 The following statistics for the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood are derived from Minnesota Compass, "Cedar Riverside Neighborhood," accessed June 14, 2020, http://www.mncompass.org/profiles/neighborhoods/minneapolis/cedar-riverside.

188 This is not to suggest that all Black or African-American residents within Cedar-Riverside are Somali; however, given the fact that the neighborhood constitutes the cultural center of Minneapolis' Somali community, the figures may be reasonably interpreted as indicating a substantive proportion of residents being from the Somali community.

189 Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream.*

B. VOTING AMONG THE MINNEAPOLIS SOMALI COMMUNITY: FROM KEITH ELLISON'S 2006 CONGRESSIONAL CAMPAIGN TO ILHAN OMAR'S 2018 ELECTION

The case of Keith Ellison's rise and entry to the U.S. House of Representatives in 2006 offers a useful entry point for assessing the salience of integration through elections. While the origins of Minnesota's Somali community dates earlier than 2006, the context and circumstances surrounding Ellison's election, including targeting and outreach to the Somali community, highlight a significant moment for the Somali community in which members of the group engaged in the electoral process to vote and help elect Ellison to Congress. Accordingly, Ellison's election provides a case study to evaluate the contributions that a theory of integration through elections provides.

Ellison's 2006 election victory was noteworthy, as he became the first Muslim member of the House of Representatives, and the first Black citizen to represent Minnesota in the House.[190] While Ellison did not emphasize his religious identity during his campaign, his faith did encourage others is the Muslim community, including ethnic Somalis, to support his candidacy.[191] The publisher of Arab American News, Osama A. Siblani, noted at the time, Ellison's campaign and election to Congress was "a step forward; it [his election] gives the Muslims a little bit of a sense of belonging."[192] Another Ellison supporter and member of the Somali community, Khadra Darsame, noted their support derived, in part, from a sense of stigma attached to being Muslim at the time, including Darsame's father being attacked for reasons believed to being Muslim.[193]

While Ellison sought support across all communities within the Fifth District, his campaign particularly targeted members of Minneapolis' Somali community, including

190 "First Muslim Elected to Congress," NBC News, November 7, 2006, http://www.nbcnews.com/id/15613050/ns/politics/t/first-muslim-elected-congress/#.XwcwbR0pBAa; and Neil MacFarquhar, "Muslim's Election Is Celebrated Here and in Mideast," *New York Times*, November 10, 2006, https://www.nytimes.com/2006/11/10/us/politics/10muslims.html.

191 MacFarquhar.

192 MacFarquhar.

193 NBC News, "First Muslim Elected to Congress."

residents of the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood.[194] While one report noted that his election generated interest among Muslim residents in his district, it is reasonable to infer that the reference to Muslim residents included members of the Somali community, who generally identify as Muslim.[195] This suggestion is buttressed by another report attributing Ellison's campaign to an increase in first-time voters among immigrant communities.[196]

The impact of the Somali community's support for Ellison may be observed through the results of the 2006 Minnesota Primary Election. Using data from a precinct in the Second Ward, specifically located within the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood, the data shows a significant increase in turnout for the 2006 Primary Election (Table 4).

Table 4. Voter Turnout in the Cedar-Riverside Neighborhood, 2004–2018.[197]

Year	Persons Registered	Persons Voted	Turnout
2004	778	69	8.87%
2006	812	106	13.05%
2008	773	83	10.74%
2010	720	110	15.28%
2012	928	57	6.14%
2014	1007	87	8.64%
2016	673	121	17.98%
2018	607	163	26.85%

As Table 4 indicates, the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood experienced an approximate four-point increase from the previous election. While only representative of one precinct, when

194 MacFarquhar, "Muslim's Election Is Celebrated Here and in Mideast"; and NBC News, "First Muslim Elected to Congress."

195 NBC News, "First Muslim Elected to Congress."

196 "Muslims in America: Finding a Voice," *The Economist*, September 23, 2006, 50–1.

197 Source: Minneapolis Voter and Election Services, "Voter Turnout," City of Minneapolis, accessed July 9, 2020, http://vote.minneapolismn.gov/results/turnout; due to redistricting in 2012 and change in precinct boundaries, Second Ward's Precinct Seven became the precinct most closely associated with the geography and population of its predecessor.

contextualized with other reports indicating a general increased turnout among Somali and Muslim residents in the Fifth District, it is reasonable to regard this increase as reflective of a wider trend within the Somali community, given its centrality in the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood.[198]

Consequently, Ellison's success in the 2006 Primary and General Election showed that religion, while a motivating factor for some voters in the district, was insufficient in preventing a Muslim candidate from succeeding in the Primary and General Elections, as expressed by Ellison's 2006 win and subsequent reelection for the next five election cycles. As noted at the time of his inaugural election victory, Ellison acknowledged receiving negative feedback from individuals indicating their general disapproval and hostility to Islam.[199] However, the fact that he continued to represent Minnesota's Fifth District until voluntary stepping-down in 2018 is indicative that the community was sufficiently acclimated (that is, being sufficiently tolerant) to being represented by an individual hailing from an ethnic and religious minority.

Ellison's 12 years in Congress arguably influenced the trajectory by which his successor, Ilhan Omar, succeeded in winning the Fifth Congressional District in 2018. Ilhan Omar is a naturalized citizen who first immigrated to the United States in 1995 as a refugee from Somalia.[200] In 2016, Omar became the first Somali-American legislator in the United States by being elected to Minnesota's House of Representatives.[201] In 2018,

198 MacFarquhar, "Muslim's Election Is Celebrated Here and in Mideast"; NBC News, "First Muslim Elected to Congress;" and The Economist, "Muslims in America."

199 MacFarquhar.

200 Doualy Xaykaothao, "Somali Refugee Makes History in U.S. Election," NPR News, November 10, 2016, https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2016/11/10/501468031/somali-refugee-makes-history-in-u-s-election; Mazin Sidahmed, "Ilhan Omar Becomes First Somali American Legislator in the US," *The Guardian*, November 9, 2016, https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/nov/09/ilhan-omar-first-somali-american-legislator-minnesota; and "US Election 2016 Result: Historic Win for Somali-American Woman," BBC, November 9, 2016, https://www.bbc.com/news/election-us-2016-37925048.

201 Xaykaothao, "Somali Refugee Makes History in U.S. Election."

she replaced Ellison in the U.S. House of Representatives to become the first Somali-American in Congress.[202]

Ilhan Omar's 2018 election victory was a function of the increased salience of the Minneapolis Somali community's political participation.[203] While Ellison's success in Congress did not *cause* Omar to succeed, it is worth noting that Ellison's prior strategy in activating and expanding voter outreach to the Somali community produced downstream consequences affecting Omar's likelihood of success. While unable to be directly observed, evidence suggests that Ellison's initial win and continued success as a Muslim member of Congress acclimated Fifth District voters to being represented by an individual of a minority faith.[204] Ellison was noteworthy for not emphasizing his religion, thus attempting to decrease the salience of religion as a point of division in his Congressional races.[205] Throughout Ellison's tenure as Representative, he retained a strong network of support, solidly defeating challengers in subsequent elections until his retirement in 2018.[206]

Subsequent to Ellison's inaugural election to the House, Minneapolis' Somali community exhibited increased political activity, including members of the community running for electoral office and participating in electoral campaigns.[207] For example, one report noted that turnout increased in Minneapolis' Sixth Ward (comprising a segment of the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood) after local members of the Somali community began running for political office in 2013.[208] This increased enthusiasm is also evident in the 2018

202 Tara Golshan, "Democrat Ilhan Omar Becomes One of the First Muslim Women Elected to Congress," Vox, November 7, 2018, https://www.vox.com/2018/11/6/18048786/minnesota-election-results-house-ilhan-omar-historic.

203 Adam Belz, "Clout of Somali-American Voters Increases in Minneapolis Elections," *Star Tribune*, September 30, 2017, https://www.startribune.com/clout-of-somali-american-voters-increases-in-minneapolis-elections/448831973/.

204 The Economist, "Muslims in America"; see also Table 4.

205 NBC News, "First Muslim Elected to Congress."

206 Office of the Secretary of State of Minnesota, "Election Results," Elections and Voting, accessed July 11, 2020, https://www.sos.state.mn.us/elections-voting/election-results/.

207 Belz, "Clout of Somali-American Voters Increases."

208 Belz.

Primary Election for the Fifth District, which saw an approximate nine-point increase in turnout compared to the 2016 Primary Election (Table 4).

In sum, Ellison's 2006 election served to activate the Somali community's participation in a substantive regard, resulting in observable increased political participation thereafter. While Ellison's 2006 campaign did not activate the community's participation de novo, the campaign nevertheless achieved a substantive increase in participation compared to prior electoral cycles.[209] In turn, this activity prompted further engagement and recruitment from the major political parties.[210] While the Somali community does not exclusively support one particular political party, it is worth noting the success by which the Minnesota Democratic Party has been successful in mobilizing the Somali community to support its candidates and positions.[211] In explaining the Somali community's general affiliation to the Democratic Party, it is worth noting at length the sentiments expressed by one member of the community living in Central Minnesota:

> Even though many Somalis may not have much exposure to local politics, some older Somalis I talk to confide in me that they primarily lean towards the Republican Party's conservative values, and they are diametrically opposed to some of the positions of the Democratic Party on social issues such as abortion, legalization of same sex marriage, funding Planned Parenthood, and many other issues. Despite the views some Somalis have on social issues, many Somalis vote for the Democratic Party. Somalis argue that the Democratic Party has stood up for lower- and middle-class families, more freedom, Medicare, and Social Security. They also believe the Republican Party does not support equal opportunity for all in terms of education, employment, and affordable health care, and are religiously intolerant, anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant, and anti-refugee, among other things. I think Republican candidates in central Minnesota don't devote much time and attention to the issues that matter to Somalis, but Democratic Party candidates mobilize politically underrepresented and potential Somali voters.[212]

209 The Economist, "Muslims in America."

210 Belz, "Clout of Somali-American Voters Increases."

211 Ibrahim, *From Somalia to Snow*, 1677–83; the Minnesota Democratic Party is formally known as the Democratic-Farmer-Labor (DFL) Party.

212 Ibrahim, *From Somalia to Snow*, 1677–88.

While only one individual's perspective, the sentiments expressed serve to account for the community's tendency to support Democratic candidates, as well as field members of its community under the Democratic Party banner.[213] This tendency is not absolute, however, given the Minnesota Republican Party's interest in making inroads with the community as early as 2012.[214]

C. DID VOTING HELP THE SOMALI COMMUNITY INTEGRATE?

It would be incorrect, however, to consider the election of a Somali-American as synonymous with sufficient integration within the U.S. mainstream. Omar's election to the House of Representatives garnered controversy, and her presence in the House generated increased attention to the Somali community, particularly through President Trump's criticisms of the Somali community.[215] Omar has also been a politically divisive figure, however it remains unclear whether the controversies associated with her are a function of her past rhetoric and actions, her status as a Somali-American and Muslim woman, or both.[216] Notwithstanding these limitations, the foregoing evidence demonstrates a positive trajectory of integration for the Somali community. It is also noteworthy that this trend is in accordance with Alba and Nee's definition of integration emphasizing the minimization of ethnicity (and religion) as obstacles in becoming part of the American mainstream.[217]

Other indications supporting increased integration for the Somali community include a 2016 report indicating Central Minnesotans' increased trust in the Somali

213 Belz, "Clout of Somali-American Voters Increases."

214 Allie Shah, "Somali-Americans Begin Making Mark on Local Politics," *Star Tribune*, October 13, 2012, https://www.startribune.com/somali-americans-are-beginning-to-make-mark-on-local-politics/173985311/.

215 Mitch Smith and Christina Capecchi, "'This Creates Fear': Trump Rally Turns Spotlight on Minnesota's Somali Community," *New York Times*, October 15, 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/15/us/minneapolis-trump-somalis.html; see also Ben Jacobs and Alan Yuhas, "Somali Migrants are 'Disaster' for Minnesota, Says Donald Trump," *The Guardian*, November 7, 2016, https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/nov/06/donald-trump-minnesota-somali-migrants-isis.

216 Mitch Smith and Matt Furber, "'She Had a Poor Choice of Words': Ilhan Omar's Constituents Grapple with Her Remarks," *New York Times*, March 8, 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/08/us/ilhan-omar-minnesota-district.html.

217 Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream*, 11.

community.[218] While the survey concerned Central Minnesota residents and excluded Minneapolis, the survey findings indicated, among other things, that 73 percent of respondents trusted persons "from Somalia" (broadly defined), a 17-point increase from a prior 2010 iteration.[219]

Although the Somali community has made progress in integrating within the American mainstream, the results remain unclear with respect to the impact that voting had in relation to these improvements. Still, Ellison's 2006 election and associated outreach to the Somali community demonstrated a significant increase in the community's political and electoral participation.[220] In turn, this political activation arguably facilitated the community's ability to engage in future elections, as well as prompted increased attention by the major political parties to engage with and recruit members the community to their party.[221] Consequently, the Somali community currently stands as a significant and influential bloc of political support for parties and candidates, and is congruent with what a theory of integration through elections would anticipate: that an increase in electoral participation, particularly through voting, should correspond to integration via political recruitment and coalition-building.

Despite increased political salience, however, electoral participation does not yet appear to have translated into tangible benefits to the community, at least through measures of income and education. For example, the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood continues to lag behind greater Minneapolis in both income and education: as of 2018, 73 percent of the neighborhood earned less than $35,000 annually (measured as household income); between 2000 and 2018, median household income dropped from $23,550 to $21,082; approximately 46 percent of households indicated living in poverty; and approximately 35 percent possessed less than a high school education.[222] When compared against general

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218 Upfront Consulting, "Social Capital Survey: Central Minnesota," Central Minnesota Community Foundation, February 21, 2016, 7, https://www.communitygiving.org/download_file/view/286/300.

219 Upfront Consulting.

220 The Economist, "Muslims in America."

221 Belz, "Clout of Somali-American Voters Increases."

222 "Cedar Riverside Neighborhood," Minnesota Compass, accessed July 10, 2020, http://www.mncompass.org/profiles/neighborhoods/minneapolis/cedar-riverside.

income trends for Minnesota's Fifth Congressional District, indicating an increase in median household income from $49,135 in 2008 to $65,782 in 2018 (an increase of $16,647), the data suggests that the Somali community's political engagement has yet to manifest in tangible benefits indicating integration and parity with the wider community.[223]

While data indicates that the Somali community has additional distance to cover before reaching sufficient integration within the American mainstream, there are reasons to remain optimistic. The wider Minnesota Somali community continues to improve in its efforts to integrate. Approximately 70 percent of the community indicates fluency in English language.[224] Employment has increased from 46.1 percent in 2000 to 66.4 percent in 2018.[225] Median household income in 2018 increased to $25,000 from $22,035 in 2000 (an increase of $2,965).[226] Data additionally shows fewer living in poverty, dropping approximately 15 points to 47.6 percent in 2018 from 62.9 percent in 2000.[227]

In sum, while the results suggest that increased political participation did not produce sufficient integration for the Somali community, they nevertheless demonstrate (1) that political engagement facilitated increased salience for the group, including accommodation and recruitment by major political parties; and (2) that the community has continued to improve in its integration efforts, in spite of its distinction as a group comprising an ethnic and religious minority in the United States. The community's trajectory continues to proceed in a positive direction. While the community's progress has been incremental, it is worth recalling that the community is still a relatively recent addition to American society, and that integration can be a generational process taking decades to accomplish.[228]

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223 U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2008–2018, Detailed Tables, generated by Nicholas Knowlton, using data.census.gov.

224 Minnesota Compass, "Groups at a Glance."

225 Minnesota Compass, "Groups at a Glance."

226 Minnesota Compass, "Groups at a Glance."

227 Minnesota Compass, "Groups at a Glance."

228 Ibrahim, *From Somalia to Snow*; Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream*; Fitzgerald, "The Sociology of International Migration"; and Bean and Brown, "Assimilation Models, Old and New."

D. CONCLUSION

Through investigating Minnesota's Somali community and its progress in achieving integration, this chapter has shown that its progress may be reasonably regarded as a function of the community's increased engagement and activity in politics. This is not to suggest that voting *caused* integration. Instead, the group's increased activity and associated voting tendencies facilitated its rise as an influential group that helped to elect the first Muslim (Keith Ellison) and Somali-American (Ilhan Omar) to Congress. In turn, these developments did not diminish the capacity of the Minnesota Democratic Party to compete in the Fifth District, encompassing the center of the Minnesota Somali community. Instead, the findings indicate that the Democratic Party generally succeeded in incorporating the Somali community into its voting coalition, as well as accommodating the group's general interests. Consequently, the group's political activity led to further political integration.

While these findings suggest that the Somali community's electoral participation facilitated improving its overall integration, they are not dispositive. Future analyses should trace the causal processes linking voting to tangible improvements in integration. While voting intuitively provides material benefits to participants, however minimal, it remains unclear whether increased political engagement produced integration benefits, or if such benefits would have occurred regardless of the group's voting habits; that is, would the same outcome have occurred if Ellison's campaign either overlooked or failed to recruit the Somali community in the 2006 campaign. Consequently, these results may be considered a "hoop test," whereby the results of this case study lend support to this project's hypothesis while holding short of confirmation.[229] In other words, while the activities of the Somali community generally accord with what a theory of integration through elections expects, additional inquiry is needed to demonstrate the theory's validity, such as through

[229] Andrew Bennett, "Process Tracing and Causal Inference," in *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*, 2nd ed., ed. Henry E. Brady and David Collier, (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield), 210.

a smoking gun or doubly decisive test.[230] Still, as the Somali community serves as an influential case that challenges this project's hypothesis, the results contribute to a broader understanding of integration and its relationship with voting and electoral participation.

230 A smoking gun test refers to a situation where a given hypothesis is sufficient but unnecessary to establish causation; a doubly decisive test is a situation where a hypothesis is both sufficient and necessary to establish causation; see Bennett, "Process Tracing and Causal Inference," 210.

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VI. CONCLUSION

Seeking to understand the relationship between electoral participation and integration, the findings identified in this study suggest that electoral participation may facilitate the integration process for new Americans. While not determinative, the results from the LNA and mt-SNA support a theory of integration through elections, and that participating in elections can assist integrating citizens in becoming part of the American mainstream. Previously, the relationship between electoral participation and integration remained understudied. It remained unclear whether integration advanced electoral and political participation, or whether electoral participation facilitated integration instead. Accordingly, this investigation inquired into the relationship between integration and voting in order to determine whether electoral participation advanced the integration process for naturalized citizens.

The integration process does not simply end once one becomes a citizen, as there is a distinction between being legally recognized as a citizen of a country and being socially recognized as part of a national (or sub-national) mainstream.[231] It is also noteworthy that integration is considered a multi-generational process that does not necessarily occur within a short period of time.[232] Nevertheless, naturalization is a significant milestone in the immigration process. Obtaining legal citizenship provides de jure membership into the wider community, and demonstrates a minimally-sufficient level of integration.[233] However, while citizenship may be regarded as a necessary condition for integration, it remains inappropriate to consider it as a sufficient condition.

A theory of integration through elections advances understanding on the integration process by explaining how electoral participation facilitates integration into the American mainstream. Drawing upon democratization literature illustrating the relationship between electoral participation and democratization, Chapter III explained how voting and electoral

231 Sumption and Flamm, *The Economic Value of Citizenship for Immigrants in the United States*.

232 Alba and Nee, *Remaking the American Mainstream*.

233 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, "The Naturalization Test."

participation socializes new citizens to democracy and its associated norms.[234] As applied in an American context, voting incorporates naturalized citizens into the political process, where they and political parties interact with one another in pursuit of obtaining their respective interests. In these encounters, parties and electoral campaigns seek to recruit integrating citizens where interests align. Where integrating citizens comprise a substantive community (such as Minneapolis' Somali community), parties may even adjust their platforms in order to accommodate integrating citizens' preferences.[235]

A. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Through evaluating a theory of integration through elections within a nested research design, the analysis and results lend support to the hypothesis that voting facilitates integration.[236] Chapter IV analyzed the baseline theory within a LNA using U.S. Census data.[237] Using descriptive statistics to assess for a general relationship between rates of voting and integration (using income and education as proxy-variables for integration), the results demonstrated that increased rates of voting corresponded with increased rates of education and income, with certain exceptions. While the findings are limited, given methodological limitations, the results nevertheless provide additional insight and information concerning the relationship between electoral participation and integration.

Given the results of the LNA supporting the baseline model, analysis proceeded to a mt-SNA that highlighted the Minneapolis Somali community and their integration experience in the United States. Using voter turnout data from a precinct in the Cedar-Riverside neighborhood (located in the heart of the Minneapolis Somali community), the analysis showed that since first arriving in the early 1990s, the Somali community has increasingly become a salient voting bloc in Minneapolis. In particular, Chapter V noted

234 Linz and Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*; and Lindberg, *Democracy and Elections in Africa*.

235 Key, *Politics, Parties, and Pressure Groups*; Sartori, *Parties and Party Systems*; and Downs, *Economic Theory of Democracy*.

236 Lieberman, "Nested Analysis as a Mixed-Method Strategy"; see also, King, Keohane, and Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry*; and Brady and Collier, eds., *Rethinking Social Inquiry*.

237 U.S. Census Bureau, "Voting and Registration: 2018."

former Congressman Ellison's 2006 campaign for the U.S. House of Representatives. Ellison's 2006 campaign was noteworthy for expanding turnout among the Minneapolis Somali community.[238] Consequently, Ellison's outreach facilitated the incorporation of the Somali community within the Democratic Party.[239] In turn, these developments facilitated the rise of Ilhan Omar, a Somali-American, to succeed Ellison after his 2018 retirement.[240] Omar's election to the House of Representatives should not be regarded as sufficient evidence of integration, as the Somali community appears to lag behind the wider Minneapolis community in income, rates of poverty, and education.[241] However, there are encouraging signs of improvement, as increases in employment, income, and English fluency indicate a positive trajectory for the Somali community.[242] While the results do not definitively demonstrate that voting and electoral participation *caused* the Somali community to be further integrated into the social mainstream (due to operational limitations), the experiences of Minneapolis' Somali community correspond to what a theory of integration through elections expects.

B. IMPLICATIONS

While the findings in this thesis are limited, they do raise a number of research and policy implications. Given the inherent association between electoral participation and integration, future research may investigate longitudinal effects of voting among integrating citizens in the United States by tracking new citizens' trajectories following their naturalization. The American National Election Studies (ANES) database may be a useful starting point for researchers to examine changes over time between voting and other

238 MacFarquhar, "Muslim's Election Is Celebrated Here and in Mideast"; NBC News, "First Muslim Elected to Congress."

239 Belz, "Clout of Somali-American Voters Increases"; The Economist, "Muslims in America"; and Ibrahim, *From Somalia to Snow*, 1677–83.

240 The Economist, "Muslims in America."

241 Minnesota Compass, "Cedar Riverside Neighborhood."

242 Minnesota Compass, "Groups at a Glance."

integration-related variables.[243] Future research may also expand into examining other cases of immigrant communities and their experiences in integrating within the American mainstream, including immigrant communities in Houston (Texas), Los Angeles (California), Miami (Florida), and Washington (D.C.). Lastly, given unresolved concerns of endogeneity, future research may further investigate causality between integration and political participation. Alternative methods for consideration, for example, may include refining integration into its constituent parts, such as through typological theory, or qualitative comparative analysis.[244]

The results of this investigation also raise policy implications for homeland security. Given limitations in extant data collection from the U.S. Census Bureau, policymakers may consider expanding Census questions to include a respondent's ethno-national background (e.g. Somali, Iraqi, Ethiopian, Chinese, etc.), as opposed to current questions inquiring into a limited typology of race (White, Black, Asian, etc.). Such limited choices constrain researchers' and policymakers' abilities to understand which communities, other than through skin color, are succeeding or struggling to integrate in the United States.

Policymakers may additionally consider proactive actions to facilitate integration, such as expanded citizenship training, to encourage political participation among new citizens. Currently, USCIS allows for voter registration to occur at the conclusion of each naturalization ceremony, after new citizens have taken the oath of allegiance to the United States.[245] USCIS additionally emphasizes the importance of voting as a duty of citizenship, as documented through its naturalization examination process.[246] However, additional

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243 "Welcome," American National Election Studies (ANES), accessed October 9, 2020, https://electionstudies.org/; unfortunately, resource limitations precluded data analysis of ANES data for this study.

244 George and Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development*, 233–62; Charles C. Ragin, *The Comparative Method: Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies* (Oakland: University of California Press, 1987).

245 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, "Chapter 5 - Administrative Naturalization Ceremonies," (USCIS, July 30, 2020), https://www.uscis.gov/policy-manual/volume-12-part-j-chapter-5.

246 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, "Civics (History and Government) Questions for the Naturalization Test."

instruction concerning the importance of voting, including its association to integrating within the United States, may be specifically provided as part of the naturalization process. Policymakers may also include an introduction to U.S. elections as a mandatory part of the naturalization process, with particular reference to the registration and voting process, as well as instructions on how to register or update one's registration information within the state in which they are naturalized. While careful to not be perceived as compelling new citizens to vote, the goal of such exercises would be to demystify the voting process so that new citizens understand the process, and know what to expect when seeking to exercise their right to vote. Lastly, given concerns of backlogs among applicants for naturalization (affecting up to 300,000 individuals), USCIS and U.S. government policymakers may prioritize adjudication of naturalization applications in order to allow new citizens to vote proximate to general elections.[247] Ensuring timely access to the polls is significant, given prior research indicating that prompt access to voting positively affects one's chances of integrating in the wider community.[248]

It is important for homeland security leaders to seek additional ways to facilitate the integration of new citizens within the American mainstream. Integration does not just imply an individual's entrance into American society. Integration furthers the strengthening of resilient communities that can be instrumental in times of crisis, such as during natural disasters and/or acts of mass violence. At its core, integration is about belonging to a community, where newcomers seek to become part of society, while society, in turn, recognizes newcomers as legitimate and rightfully-belonging members. The findings in this study provide insights and cost-effective means for improving integration in the United States that guard against disaffection and the creation of social underclasses.

In sum, integration contains implications for democracy. Having a successful integration process is instrumental in maintaining a democratic society.[249] This study has

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247 Daniel Gonzalez, "More Than 300,000 Immigrants May Not Become Citizens in Time to Vote as COVID-19 Stalls Process," *USA Today*, July 21, 2020, https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2020/07/21/citizenship-process-backlog-coronavirus-pandemic/5471682002/.

248 Ferwerda, Finseraas, and Bergh, "Voting Rights and Immigrant Incorporation."

249 Linz and Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, 7.

shown how elections and voting facilitate integration for new citizens in the United States. In the same vein that elections foster democracy, elections further integration through similar norm-inculcating and intersubjective learning processes between integrated and integrating citizens.[250] These findings promise to not only advance our understanding of integration as an academic exercise; they additionally provide practical insights relevant for advancing the ability of the United States to integrate newcomers and their descendants, thus strengthening national ties, inculcating democratic norms, and fostering communal resilience in times of adversity.

[250] Lindberg, *Democracy and Elections in Africa*; and Lindberg, ed., *Democratization by Elections*.

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